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ABSTRACT

Volume 1 presents the findings of an evaluation of Iowa's "merged area" organizational system for adult basic education (ABE), a system which operates from 15 regional community colleges or vocational-technical schools serving as area schools. The perspective discrepancy assessment methodology of the evaluation team was the outgrowth of ABE national field studies and surveys. The strategy analyzes: (1) discrepancies between the expectations of those involved in the program and current practice, and (2) discrepancies between the expectations of those most directly involved in policy formulation and program implementation. Iowa's 400 ABE teachers were randomly divided, half receiving a questionnaire on expectations and half a questionnaire on current practice; a different questionnaire was administered to a random group of students. Teacher return was 71 percent and 82 percent, and student return was 728 questionnaires out of 1,000. Other questionnaires were distributed to adult education directors, learning center coordinators, co-sponsors, and Department of Public Instruction representatives. Discussions of results and interpretive summaries are presented: (1) covering expectations and current practice in six key areas of decision making and program development: goal setting, instruction, recruitment, staffing, staff development, and collaboration and (2) providing extended analyses of characteristics and perspectives of students, teachers, and learning center coordinators. (EA)

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# AN EVALUATION OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF IOWA

## Volume I: Findings

A Perspectives Discrepancy Assessment

1974-1975

Evaluation Team

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CE 004 923

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We are indebted to Jane Sellen, Georgie Klevar, and Barbara Wing, area ABE coordinators, who served on the Evaluation Committee with dedication, professional competence, and hard work. They provided real leadership.

Bill Rauhauser served briefly as the second DPI representative on the Committee. Upon his departure from the Adult Education Unit, he was replaced by Jack Sumner.

Dr. Sumner played a critical dual role. First, he served as a staff member of the Center for Adult Education with responsibility to foster the adoption and utilization of innovative practices in ABE in HEW Region VII. In this capacity, he collaborated with the survey team in making field visits to coordinators in their merged areas and in field testing the student questionnaire used in this study. Subsequently, he left the staff of the Center to assume a full-time professional position as staff consultant for DPI. As such, he served as a member of the Evaluation Committee. As a valued colleague in both posts, the evaluation team owes him its sincere thanks.

Gladys Irish assisted the team as a consultant in the analysis of data, and Hildegard Piesch prepared the manuscript.

AN EVALUATION OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF IOWA

A Perspectives Discrepancy Assessment

Volume I


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# INTRODUCTION

## Overview of ABE in Iowa

In 1965, a year before the Adult Education Act became federal law launching adult basic education (ABE) as a national program sponsored by the Office of Education and administered through the states, Iowa established its distinctive "merged area" organizational system. By providing for 15 regional community colleges or vocational-technical schools to serve as "area schools," a series of cooperative relationships evolved with the county school system, higher education institutions, community agencies, and the State Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to create a comprehensive delivery system.

Each merged area has an adult and continuing education director* who, in addition to ABE, is concerned with high school completion programs, an Agricultural Production Program for Veterans, consumer education, drinking drivers courses, and several apprenticeship programs. There is one or more part- or full-time ABE coordinator(s) in each area (more than one in a few areas), and a learning center coordinator who works with ABE students among others in the area school, is also frequently on the staff of the area school. ABE courses are offered at the area school and throughout the merged area. They are often co-sponsored by other agencies and organizations which provide students, space, or other resources, including CAP agencies and correctional and mental health institutions. Five local school districts offer adult programs independently of the merged schools. School districts in Iowa may also have a district coordinator of adult education on their staffs.

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* Some areas have more than one adult education director.

The Adult Education Unit in the Department of Public Instruction is concerned with statewide programs in ABE, high school completion, general adult and continuing education, and career supplementary education. Leadership is provided through the provision of consultant services and funds to the merged area adult programs. The Chief of the Adult Education Unit is assisted by a supervisor and four consultants who are assigned by geographical and functional responsibility. Direct services to the ABE program are provided on a day-to-day basis by the Supervisor and two regional consultants, each of whom covers half the state. All have responsibilities in addition to ABE. The State Plan for 1973 calls for representatives of DPI to make a minimum of one on-site visitation of the instructional process at each of the area schools in addition to other visits to consult on administrative and financial problems. The consultant is to make recommendations for improvement of instruction and discuss with the ABE coordinator and adult education director how to improve recruitment, curriculum, and program operations.

Iowa has an average daily attendance formula for state financial support to education, including adult education. Half of the state's federal ABE funds are allocated to merged areas on a basis of size of size of enrollments over the past three years; the other half is distributed according to the size of target population in the merged area.

An Iowa Advisory Committee for adult education has been functioning since 1968. It is composed of 15 members who meet four times a year to advise the adult education unit of the DPI. Area schools are encouraged to establish similar advisory committees.

Officially, the general objective and scope of the ABE program has been formulated as follows:

> Adult Basic Education offers instruction in communicative, computational and social skills for adults sixteen years of age and older whose inability to effectively use those skills substantially impairs their obtaining or retaining employment commensurate with their real ability. The aim of Adult Basic Education is to raise the educational level of disadvantaged adults and enable them to become more productive and responsible citizens. The program of instruction includes elementary level education for adults with particular emphasis on the communicative skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and the computative skills using the content of materials containing information on good buying, health, human relations, and home and family living.[1]

The Iowa State Plan for Adult Basic Education for 1973 specifies that ABE shall include "communication, computational and life coping skills," English as a second language (ESL), and subsequent preparation leading toward the high school equivalency certificate. Provision is made for staff development sessions in each of the 15 area schools, "in addition to statewide, regional and national workshops." The Plan calls for the following three priorities:

Priorities

First: Grade levels 0-4

Second: Grade levels 5-8

Third: Grade levels 9-12

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[1]State of Iowa Department of Public Instruction. Adult and Continuing Education in Iowa for Fiscal Year 1973. Report to the Iowa State Board of Public Instruction, October, 1973, p. 4.

# Table 1

## Selected ABE Program Data by Merged Area

| Indicator | I | II | III | IV | V | VI | VII | IX | X | XI | XII | XIII | XIV | XV | XVI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TARGET POPULATION | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Reported 1/74 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Grade 0-8 | 6,137 | 21,125 | -- | 4,600 | 6,955 | 20,000 | -- | 35,965 | -- | 50,000 | 8,200 | 8,087 | 870 | 9,500 | 5,046 |
| 9-12 | 30,395 | 40,487 | -- | 23,100 | 39,711 | 23,000 | -- | 77,324 | -- | 140,000 | 35,000 | 35,000 | 5,270 | 45,000 | 27,230 |
| Sub-Total | 36,532 | 61,612 | -- | 27,700 | 46,666 | 43,000 | -- | 113,289 | 58,100 | 190,000 | 43,200 | 43,087 | 6,140 | 54,500 | 32,276 |
| 1973 Cumulative* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Age 16-25 Grade 0-12 | 3,382 | 1,264 | 1,194 | 940 | 3,010 | 1,836 | 3,890 | 6,808 | 5,600 | 12,406 | 3,482 | 5,164 | 1,134 | 2,634 | 2,784 |
| Age 25+ 0-4 | 2,441 | 823 | 679 | 95 | 1,362 | 961 | 1,788 | 2,620 | 2,512 | 5,889 | 2,267 | 1,942 | 721 | 2,062 | 1,358 |
| 5-8 | 36,387 | 14,413 | 10,272 | 15,878 | 21,012 | 13,462 | 25,439 | 33,345 | 32,345 | 58,803 | 24,213 | 26,796 | 12,459 | 26,785 | 16,030 |
| 9-12 | 57,307 | 26,175 | 23,051 | 17,834 | 48,132 | 30,847 | 58,719 | 77,324 | 89,058 | 174,762 | 53,069 | 56,,960 | 23,159 | 46,409 | 35,872 |
| Sub-Total | 99,517 | 42,675 | 35,196 | 35,616 | 74,336 | 47,106 | 89,836 | 120,097 | 129,515 | 251,800 | 83,031 | 90,862 | 37,473 | 77,890 | 56,044 |
| ENROLLMENT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Reported 1/74 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Grade 0-4 | 128 | 252 | -- | 35 | 50 | 16 | 200 | 197 | 350 | 350 | 240 | 20 | 4 | 350 | 151 |
| 5-8 | 175 | 105 | -- | 80 | 436 | 132 | 450 | 445 | 840 | 700 | 315 | 60 | 15 | 400 | 139 |
| 9-12 | 173 | 143 | -- | 20 | 125 | 40 | 150 | 267 | 600 | 950 | 235 | 20 | 37 | 200 | 66 |
| Sub-Total | 476 | 400 | -- | 135 | 611 | 188 | 800 | 909 | 1,790 | 2,000 | 790 | 100 | 56 | 950 | 356 |
| % Enrolled Grade 0-4 | 26.89 | 63.00 | -- | 25.93 | 8.18 | 8.51 | 25.00 | 21.67 | 19.55 | 17.50 | 30.38 | 20.00 | 7.14 | 36.84 | 42.42 |
| 1974 Cumulative** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Grade 0-8 | 742 | 493 | 783 | 105 | 587 | 288 | 1,020 | 1,566 | 4,111 | 2,939 | 1,135 | 1,190 | 191 | 3,312 | 391 |
| 9-12 | 193 | 263 | 75 | -- | 25 | 68 | 1,334 | 451 | 2,537 | 4,349 | -- | 221 | -- | -- | 769 |
| Sub-Total | 935 | 756 | 858 | 105 | 612 | 356 | 2,354 | 2,017 | 6,648 | 7,288 | 1,135 | 1,411 | 191 | 3,312 | 1,160 |
| 1973 Cumulative | 1,209 | 513 | 806 | 123 | 549 | 255 | 513 | 1,154 | 2,007 | 2,439 | 1,155 | 770 | 139 | 2,821 | 445 |
| 1970 Cumulative | 70 | 349 | 412 | 23 | 298 | 81 | 254 | 750 | 195 | 863 | 454 | 204 | 58 | 453 | 862 |
| % of Change 73-74 | -22.7 | 47.4 | +6.5 | -14.6 | +11.5 | +39.6 | +358.9 | +74.8 | +221.3 | +198.8 | -1.7 | +83.2 | +37.4 | +17.4 | +160.7 |
| % OF TARGET POPULATION ENROLLED | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cumulative (*/**) | 0.94 | 1.77 | 2.44 | 0.29 | 0.82 | 0.76 | 2.62 | 1.68 | 5.13 | 0.89 | 1.37 | 1.55 | 0.5 | 4.25 | 2.07 |
| Reported 1/74 | 1.30 | 0.65 | -- | 0.49 | 1.31 | 0.44 | -- | 0.80 | 3.08 | 1.05 | 1.83 | 0.23 | 0.91 | 1.74 | 1.10 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CLASSES WITHIN 10 MILE RADIUS (%) | 50.00 | 18.00 | 4.00 | 20.00 | 23.00 | 20.00 | 50.00 | 61.00 | 20.00 | 15.00 | 55.00 | 25.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 | 36.00 |
| CLASSES CO-SPONSORED (%) | 23.0 | 19.2 | 3.0 | 95.0 | 11.0 | 35.0 | 8.0 | 15/70 | 10.0 | 25.0 | 40.0 | 20.0 | 40.0 | 80.0 | 38.0 |
| NUMBER OF TEACHERS | 44 | 27 | 20 | 18 | 35 | 27 | 30 | 32 | 30 | 48 | 36 | 43 | 4 | 37 | 16 |
| % Non-traditional teachers | 25.0 | 47.8 | 60.0 | 30.0 | 44.4 | 41.7 | 40.9 | 45.5 | 54.5 | 50.0 | 42.9 | 36.8 | -- | 25.0 | 53.8 |
| TEACHER-STUDENT RATIO | 10.82 | 14.81 | -- | 7.50 | 17.46 | 6.96 | 26.67 | 27.41 | 59.67 | 41.67 | 21.94 | 2.33 | 14.00 | 25.68 | 22.25 |
| STUDENT DROPOUT RATE (%) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Reported by teachers | 26.4 | 26.3 | 11.8 | 19.9 | 41.3 | 20.5 | 18.2 | 32.0 | 28.5 | 21.9 | 17.3 | 37.7 | -- | 4.4 | 29.7 |
| Reported by coordinators | 25.0 | 20.1 | 10.0 | 20.0 | 35.0 | 15.0 | 5.0 | 25/20 | 30.0 | -- | 40.0 | 40.0 | -- | 10.0 | 41.0 |
| STUDENT ABSENTEE RATE (%) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (Reported by teachers) | 27.3 | 33.7 | 18.3 | 15.0 | 42.1 | 31.8 | 18.6 | 25.8 | 30.5 | 27.7 | 23.5 | 29.5 | -- | 5.8 | 46.8 |
| STUDENTS WITH GED THEIR FIRST PRIORITY (%) | 56.8 | 65.6 | 36.4 | 26.9 | 64.6 | 60.0 | 61.0 | -- | 57.1 | 68.2 | 28.8 | 41.6 | 46.7 | 43.0 | 65.5 |
| COORDINATOR | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Time Devoted to ABE | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hours per week | 16/30 | 28 | 23 | 20 | 46 | 20 | 38 | 52/55 | 40/20 | 35 | 20 | 30 | 55 | 40 | 38 |
| % total time | 100/60 | 100.0 | 82.0 | 50.0 | 100.0 | 38.0 | 79.0 | 100/92 | 85/50 | 70.0 | 40.0 | 75.0 | 92.0 | 95.0 | 84.0 |
| Salary from Federal ABE Funds (%) | 100.0 | -- | 90.0 | 50.0 | 90.0 | -- | 50.0 | 50/100 | 100/100 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 24.0 | 100.0 | 84.0 |
| TOTAL ABE BUDGET | 45,470 | 40,700 | 53,113 | 17,000 | 35,267 | 28,320 | 88,754 | 87,128 | 110,000 | 108,100 | 90,500 | 28,000 | 5,385 | 84,000 | 74,056 |
| Federal ABE Funds (%) | 85.0 | 46.4 | 40.0 | 55.0 | 90.0 | 87.0 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 32.0 | 50.0 | 45.0 | 80.0 | 45.0 | 56.0 |
| State and/or Local Funds (%) | 15.0 | 53.6 | 60.0 | 45.0 | 10.0 | 13.0 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 60.0 | 50.0 | 55.0 | 15.0 | 55.0 | 44.0 |
| Budget for In-Service Ed. (%) | -- | 3.5 | -- | 4.0 | 0.04 | 5.0 | 0.3 | 1.72 | -- | 2.0 | 5.0 | 6.01 | 0.2 | 20.0 | 1.8 |
| Budget for Recruitment (%) | -- | -- | 20.0 | 5.0 | -- | 5.0 | -- | -- | 6.0 | -- | 10.0 | -- | 5.0 | 10.0 | 3.0 |
| COST PER CONTACT HOUR*** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1974 Cumulative (%) | 1.18 | 1.72 | 1.14 | 4.82 | 2.19 | 1.43 | 1.29 | 1.51 | 1.20 | 1.51 | 1.50 | 2.19 | 1.21 | 0.67 | 1.57 |

SOURCE: All data taken from questionnaire findings except as noted. In some cases data reported from two coordinators in same merged area has been totalled.

* DPI. Iowa's State Plan for Adult Basic Education, 9/73, Appendix I.

** DPI. "Adult Education Enrollment in Iowa's Area Schools for ... 1973-74 School Year," 9/74; cumulative enrollments for 1970 and 1973 provided by DPI.

*** Data provided by DPI; computed on basis of FTE (one FTE = 540 hours).

Table 1 presents selected statistical information about program development in each merged area.* Note the sharply skewed distribution of enrollments, proportions of enrollment increase over the last year, proportions of the target population enrolled, and particularly at the 0-4 level, proportion of classes within 10 miles, student dropout rate, size of budgets and proportions allocated to recruitment and in-service training, cost per contact hour, teacher-student ratio, proportions of classes co-sponsored, and proportions of coordinator time devoted to ABE. Certainly the local circumstances within which these differences are to be interpreted are real and important. It is up to the leaders of ABE in Iowa to determine which of these factors and in what combination represent useful indicators of program effort for assessing progress in areas of roughly similar characteristics. These discrepancies among the areas may not be dismissed lightly. Some may be fully justified by local differences, others may not. What is needed is an informed consensus on a rationale for formulating useful state guidelines. Surely many of these data should appropriately be incorporated in a standardized reporting system to provide cumulative information upon which to identify program needs and plan accordingly.

Methodology

The methodology used in this evaluation of Iowa's ABE program was developed by the evaluation team through the Center for Adult Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, out of two years of national field studies of ABE and several national questionnaire surveys. Over

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* By an anomaly, there is no area VIII.

a year of direct development and field testing went into the evolution of the distinctive methodology known as "perspective discrepancy assessment" as originally formulated in An Evaluation Guide for Adult Basic Education Programs (A. Knox, J. Mezirow, G. Darkenwald, and H. Beder; U.S. Printing Office).

Six major areas of decision making were identified in ABE programs: recruitment, staffing, instruction, staff development, collaboration, and goal setting. The plan for the Iowa evaluation called for adapting instruments from the Guide to establish program effectiveness in these six areas. The strategy of perspective discrepancy assessment calls for analyzing two dimensions of congruence: (1) discrepancies between the expectations of those involved in the program and current practice, and (2) discrepancies between the expectations of those most directly involved in policy formulation and program implementation. Expectations are of the order of "Given the constraints of the law, budget, personnel, and student characteristics in this program how should it be operating in regard to ...?" Major discrepancies between expectations and current practice and between expectations of administrators, teachers, students, and others involved can signal major problems or potential problems. These are problems amenable to corrective action through policy and program revision and staff development efforts.

The rationale of perspective discrepancy assessment is based upon the assumption that educational process exists as an object of analysis only as a function of the way it is perceived through the eyes of those involved in interaction -- those who make it happen. What does and does not happen can be only understood by ascertaining the meaning of

this interaction for people who plan and implement the program. To improve the program one must understand not only what is happening but why.

In a sense the evaluation may be considered formative: it is not meant to provide information for administrative policing or for inviting invidious comparisons between the local programs involved or individuals working in them. It was agreed at the outset that in presenting a statewide picture no area program, class, or individual would be identified by name or location. At the same time, the evaluation team suggested and DPI agreed that information on his own merged area would be made available to each local ABE coordinator to facilitate follow-up. Even at this level, anonimity of persons and classes was to be scrupulously observed.

The plan calls for a follow-up workshop involving area coordinators, directors, and DPI representatives to be conducted by the evaluation team in early September, 1975, to review findings, explore the possibilities of securing consensus on critical issues involving serious discrepancies between expectations and current practice and among expectations of colleagues, and plan follow-up in terms of setting priorities for policy and program review and staff development. Each coordinator will receive aggregate questionnaire results for teacher, student, and co-sponsors in his merged area and will be assisted in making an area analysis of these findings upon which to plan policy, program, and staff development changes.

Procedures

A statewide Evaluation Committee was appointed by the DPI composed of two representatives from the state office and three experienced area ABE coordinators from different parts of Iowa.* The Committee had two functions. One was to establish a consensus pertaining to its expectations concerning each phase of the program to be evaluated. This was accomplished in intensive workshop meetings in mid-September, 1974. The other function of the Committee was to review all instruments developed by the evaluation team to determine the relevance, validity, and appropriateness of wording each item to be used in the evaluation. Each instrument was distributed in draft form to Committee members and modified according to their suggestions. The DPI was final arbiter in determining needed changes.

ABE coordinators from Iowa's 15 area schools were interviewed by evaluation team members on their respective campuses during the months of September and October, 1974. Interviews were for the purpose of orienting coordinators to the purpose and nature of the evaluation, to sensitize evaluation team members to the realities of each area program at first hand, and to test the relevance and validity of the questions to be asked later by questionnaires pertaining to current practice.

The Evaluation strategy called for gathering data by questionnaire on current practice from the coordinators, teachers, and students as well as DPI representatives, local adult education directors, learning

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* Committee members included ABE coordinators Jane Sellen, Georgie Klevar, and Barbara Wing. DPI representatives were Don McGuire and Bill Rauhauser who was replaced by Dr. Jack Sumner.

laboratory coordinators, and co-sponsors of classes such as other government agencies, hospitals, or industries. A class was considered co-sponsored when another agency or organization provided funds, classroom space, other resources, or over half the students enrolled. Questionnaires designed for each group also contained a selected number of items pertaining to program expectations.

Iowa's 400 ABE teachers were randomly divided within each merged area into two groups, half receiving a questionnaire pertaining to expectations, the other half a second form of the same questionnaire pertaining to current practice. A totally new questionnaire form was developed and field tested for students. This was administered by every fourth teacher on our merged area list to students in his or her largest class. The DPI completed its own questionnaire and sent another one to local adult education directors; all other questionnaires were distributed by the ABE coordinators. Coordinators and directors attended an orientation session in January, 1975 in Des Moines at which the director of the evaluation team distributed these materials.

Completed questionnaires were sent directly to the evaluation team by the merged area coordinators, who received materials from teachers and students in sealed envelopes to preserve their confidentiality. Teachers were instructed to ask a student to collect completed student questionnaires and seal them in an envelope. Questionnaires were forwarded by the coordinator to the team unopened.

The student questionnaire was designed to avoid value judgments about the teacher inasmuch as experience suggests that answers to such questions tend to be universally slanted toward the positive. Instead,

we asked forced choice questions pertaining to student preferences, interests, and expectations.

Teacher questionnaire returns were high, but not as high as we had hoped. Each area coordinator was given a list of teachers who were to receive Form A (intended practice) and Form B (current practice) and was provided with the exact number of questionnaires needed. To assuage teacher fears about confidentiality, the questionnaires were precoded only to identify the merged area -- no code numbers were assigned that would permit us to identify non-respondents by name. Consequently, when we received incomplete returns from a particular merged area our only recourse was to inform the coordinator (through the DPI) that a certain proportion of Form A and/or Form B questionnaires were missing.

Out of a total of 200 teachers who received Form A, we received completed questionnaires from 142 or 71%. Inexplicably, the return rate was higher for those who received Form B (current practice): 164 out of 200 returned completed questionnaires for a response rate of 82%. Response rate by merged area varied considerably. No returns were received from one merged area, which was reported to be undergoing reorganization and did not employ any teachers at the time of the survey. Virtually complete returns were received from seven of the merged areas; in four merged areas returns ran about 80%; in two areas returns were received from approximately two-thirds of the teachers and in one area the return rate was only 33%.

The return rate for the student questionnaires was satisfactory for our purposes. As noted above, every fourth teacher on our list of teachers for each merged area was designated to distribute the

student questionnaire to his/her largest class (if teacher taught more than one class). Thus 100 teachers were asked to distribute student questionnaires. We estimated average class size to be about 10 and expected a maximum return of 1,000 student questionnaires. The actual number of usable responses received was 728. Several teachers indicated in notes with their returns that their students were severely mentally retarded and had difficulty understanding and completing the questionnaire. These questionnaires were not included in the 728 used for analysis.

The Director of Adult Education and Learning Center Coordinator questionnaires were distributed by the DPI. Director returns were received from all 15 merged areas. We received three director questionnaires from one merged area that has three separate campuses and single questionnaires from the other 14 merged areas. Learning Center Coordinator questionnaires were returned by 20 ILC coordinators from 11 of the 15 merged areas. Not all areas had ILCs at the time of the survey and 4 merged areas had more than one ILC and therefore more than one ILC coordinator.

The coordinators were asked to distribute the Co-Sponsor Questionnaire to each organization with which they co-sponsored ABE classes. We suggested that the coordinators write a cover letter explaining the nature of the evaluation study and encouraging the co-sponsor to complete the questionnaire. A total of 68 completed co-sponsor questionnaires were returned to the DPI and forwarded to the evaluation team in New York.

The DPI Questionnaire was completed by all four staff members with responsibility for ABE in the state of Iowa.

The Learning Center Coordinator, Adult Education Director, Coordinator, and DPI questionnaires were hand tabulated with frequency distributions, means and percentage distributions computed where appropriate. The Teacher, Student, and Co-Sponsor questionnaire data were keypunched and verified and analyzed by computer. Since discrepancy analysis relies heavily on comparing percentage distributions among groups (e.g., teachers, coordinators, evaluation committee), basic data analysis consisted of generating percentage distributions and descriptive statistics such as means by computer program.

Since we were interested in comparing teacher reports of current practice with analogous items pertaining to expectations, an additional step was performed in the analysis of the teacher data. By use of a crosstabulation procedure, we were able to test the statistical significance of differences between intended and current practice using the chi square test. Thus we could tell, for example, if a difference of 10% between an intended practice item and its current practice counterpart was simply due to chance or was statistically significant at the .05 level or higher. All current/intended practice differences reported as such (between teacher groups in Section III) are statistically significant although not all statistically significant differences are reported since not all such differences are consistent enough to be of practical interest.

Several exploratory analyses using more sophisticated statistical methods were performed on both the teacher and student data. For example, we explored the relationship of teaching experience to various items on the teacher questionnaire using cross-tabulation procedures. A number

of cross tabulations were run on the student data and a correlation matrix was also generated to explore relationships between various items. The final step in exploratory data analysis was to use multiple linear regression to sort out the effects of a number of independent variables on selected dependent variables for both the teacher and student data. For example, we examined the impact of student subject matter and teaching style preferences on their self-reported academic progress. The results of these statistical analyses are reported in sections of this report dealing with teachers and students in Section III.

Organization of Report

The following six chapters each deal with a key area of decision making and program development: Goal Setting, Instruction, Recruitment, Staffing, Staff Development, and Collaboration. In each of these chapters specific discrepancies are identified between the expectations of the Evaluation Committee and current practice reported by ABE coordinators and one or more of the following groups: teachers, students, adult education directors, learning center coordinators, co-sponsors, and DPI representatives. The relationship between expectations and current practice reported by teachers is noted. Evidence of the degree of agreement within each of the groups of coordinators, directors, teachers, and students is presented. The chapter on Staffing includes information on the characteristics of coordinators, directors, and DPI representatives.

The last three chapters of Volume I report findings in an extended analysis of characteristics and perspectives of Students, Teachers, and Learning Center Coordinators respectively. Refinements in the analysis

of data are reported, particularly that pertaining to teachers.

Volume II, bound separately, contains copies of instruments used in this assessment with aggregate statewide responses. Included are questionnaires and findings completed by the Evaluation Committee, coordinators, directors, teachers (both intent and current practice forms), students, learning center coordinator, co-sponsors, and DPI representatives. A cross index of questionnaire items is included.

# EXPECTATIONS AND CURRENT PRACTICE

## GOAL SETTING

The goal setting process is conceived here as a sequence of functions which include problem identification, resource identification, determining feasible alternatives, anticipating the consequences of the alternative action possibilities, choosing among alternatives, assessing the result of the choice to improve subsequent decision making, and setting standards against which the goal setting process may be judged.

In most ABE programs some or all of these functions are shared. There are questions which may be appropriately raised about the extent or nature of this distribution of responsibility. Such questions are crucial, but their answers will be essentially determined by philosophical or ideological assumptions. In this study, however, we are directly concerned with establishing empirically the differences in perception and practice which pertain among those involved in the ABE program involving two basic questions. One is a determination of which factors are of most influence in setting goals. The other is concerned with establishing the locus of responsibility for the function of goal setting.

### Major Influences

What factors are most influential in goal setting and in determining local program priorities? The Evaluation Committee felt that Expectations of Students should be most influential with the State ABE Plan and General Population Characteristics sharing second importance. The factors Relations with School System, GED Exam, and Expectations of the Community the Committee believed should have high influence ratings.

Coordinators, reporting on current practice, identified as most influential Expectations of Students, but this factor was only slightly more influential than General Population Characteristics. Over two-thirds rated the State ABE Plan and the GED Exam as high influence considerations. However, coordinators were divided over the influence of the State Plan with a third rating it of low or average influence. There was also a split on the Population item with 7 coordinators rating it most influential and 7 assigning it an average influence rating.

The GED Exam was assigned the highest influence rating by two of the four DPI representatives responding; the remaining two assigned this item a high influence rating. All indicated that Expectations of the Students should have a high influence rating, but only one respondent considered this factor of greatest influence. Relations with Community College/Voc.-Tech. System was rated by three respondents as high in influence. DPI representatives were divided in their judgments of the degree of influence of the State ABE Plan; one rated this item highest in influence, one lowest, and two assigned it average influence ratings. Expectations of the Community was not given a high influence rating by either coordinators or DPI representatives.

A related finding pertains to area advisory committees. The Evaluation Committee's expectations were that an advisory committee, exclusively concerned with ABE should be given high priority. Only four coordinators reported such councils in operation in their areas.

Evaluation Committee ranked in order of importance six goals which should pertain to the program. Coordinators, teachers, and DPI representatives were asked to rank the order of emphasis actually placed on them in current practice.

Table 2

Perceptions of Program Goals
(1=Most Emphasis; 6=Least Emphasis)

| | Rank Order of Importance | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Intent | | Current Practice* | |
| Major Influences | EC | Coord. | Teachers | DPI |
| A. Increased Self-Confidence of Students | 1 | 1 | 1 (1) | 1 |
| B. Completion of 8th Grade Level | 6 | 5 | 6 (5) | 6 |
| C. Increased Competency in Language and Computational Skills | 4 | 2 | 4 (3) | 3 |
| D. Preparation for High School Equivalency Exam | 5 | 4 | 2 (4) | - |
| E. Increased Ability to Cope with Adult Life Roles and Problems | 2 | 3 | 3 (2) | - |
| F. Achievement of Individual Short-Term Goals | 3 | 6 | 5 (6) | 4 |

*Rankings of teachers of goal emphasis which should pertain to the program are in parenthesis.

Table 2 is important because discrepancies can only lead to problems of misunderstanding of criteria for judging program and individual performance. Especially serious is the variation in emphasis given Increased competency in Language and Computational Skills between Coordinators, who ranked it second in importance, and their teachers who reported it as fourth among the six goals and Preparation for High School Equivalency Exam for which ratings were exactly reversed and the greatest variance is found between Committee expectations and reported practice by teachers. For those teachers asked to indicate which priorities should pertain, there was a dramatic difference in perspective from the

Evaluation Committee pertaining to Achievement of Individual Short-Term Goals. This variance was nearly as great between the Committee's rating and that of teachers reporting current practice.

There was least agreement among coordinators on the priority currently given to Preparation for High School Equivalency Exam and Increased Ability to Cope with Adult Life Roles and Problems. Over 20% assigned the first item a high priority rating and half assigned it a low priority rating; exactly the reverse proportions were found for the second item. These same two items evoked the greatest disagreement among the teachers as well. The Equivalency Exam item found 37% of the teachers reporting current practice assigning a high priority but 46% giving a low rating. The goal on Coping was rated high by 42% and low by 17%. Teachers reporting expectations rather than current practice were even more divided over these two goals.

Among the four DPI respondents there was wide variation in assigning goal priorities. Rankings in Table 2 were reported by two of the four. There was a four point spread in ratings for the last three items in the Table. No respondents agreed on the two goals of most importance or the two goals of least importance.

Allocation of Responsibility

The Evaluation Committee was asked to indicate who within the structure of the ABE program should have the power to make decisions pertaining to Recruitment, Staffing, Instruction, In-Service Education, and Collaboration. The Committee indicated that power should be vested in the DPI for In-Service Education, in the director for Recruiting and Collaboration, and in the coordinator for all five functions.

The coordinators agreed that they were responsible in current practice for all five areas of decision making. However, over half of those responding to this item reported that the director of adult education also had the power of decision making and standard setting for Staffing, In-Service Education, and Collaboration and that teachers had decision making power for Instruction. Less than half the coordinators completing this item attributed decision making power for In-Service Education to the DPI. The coordinators reported that the DPI was without major responsibility for any of the five functions except for setting in-service education standards. Most indicated that it was the director, the teachers, and the coordinators themselves who set standards for in-service training. Less than half the coordinators responding to this item reported that in current practice the DPI set standards in the areas of Recruiting, Staffing, Instruction or Collaboration -- as expected by the Committee. Most reported that they consulted with the school district coordinator on staffing matters; this was not anticipated by the Committee.

Coordinators' reports of current practice do not sustain the Committee's expectations that Assessing Effectiveness of Decisions should be the responsibility of the DPI for Recruiting and Collaboration. They also reported the adult education directors as responsible for assessing effectiveness of Recruiting, Staffing, and In-Service Education. The Committee expected them to assume this responsibility for only Recruitment and Collaboration. Coordinators reported exclusive responsibility for decisions, standards, and assessment relating to instruction.

Directors report that they are most directly involved in ABE in selection of the coordinator and supervising fiscal management in program

development; most indicate least intensive involvement in student recruitment and most in staff development. Over half the directors responding identified themselves as exercising decision making power, along with the coordinators, in all five areas of decision making. Only a fourth or less of the directors attribute decision making or responsibility for assessing effectiveness in any of these areas to DPI, but DPI's role as a standard setter in Recruitment, Instruction, and In-Service Education is acknowledged by most. Most directors reported that they themselves set standards, along with the coordinator in Recruiting, Staffing, and Instruction; about a third reported that this joint responsibility extended to other areas as well. DPI was reported as having consulting functions in the areas of Recruiting, Instruction, and In-Service Education.

Contrary to other reports of current practice, two of the four DPI respondents reported that DPI has decision making power for In-Service Education and indicated that the director has joint responsibility for decision making with the coordinator in matters of Collaboration with Community Agencies. All DPI respondents agreed that the DPI set standards for In-Service Education most added Recruitment and half the respondents added Staffing and Instruction. Three DPI representatives out of four reported that Assessing Effectiveness of the program was a DPI responsibility in all areas except Recruiting. Recruiting was reported as a major assessment responsibility only by two respondents. The director was reported as responsible for Setting Standards only in the areas of Staffing, Collaboration, and In-Service Education. One respondent included the areas of Recruitment and Instruction. There was agreement

that the coordinator set standards in all areas, although only two of the four respondents reported that this was true in the area of Collaboration. The director was seen as sharing decision making power only in the area of Collaboration, although one respondent reported that this responsibility extended to Staffing, Recruitment and In-Service Education as well. None included Instruction. Respondents agreed that in practice the director did set standards for Collaboration, Staffing, and In-Service Education; one person reported that this function extended to Instruction and Recruitment. Principal findings are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Perceptions of Responsibility
(Half or more respondents to this item concurring)

| | Evaluation Committee* N=5 | | | Coordinators N=13 | | | Directors N=13 | | | DPI N=4 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Coor. | Dir. | DPI | Coor. | Dir. | DPI | Coor. | Dir. | DPI | Coor. | Dir. | DPI |
| Recruiting | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Decisions | x | x | | x | | | x | x | | x | | |
| Standards | x | x | x | x | x | | x | x | x | x | | x |
| Assessment | x | x | x | x | x | | x | x | | x | x | x |
| Staffing | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Decisions | x | | | x | x | | x | x | | x | | |
| Standards | | x | x | x | x | | x | x | | x | x | x |
| Assessment | x | | | x | x | | | x | | x | x | x |
| Instruction | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Decisions | x | | | x | | | x | x | | x | | |
| Standards | x | | x | x | | | | x | x | x | | x |
| Assessment | x | | | x | | | | x | | x | x | x |
| In-Service Ed. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Decisions | x | | x | x | x | | x | x | | x | | x |
| Standards | x | | x | x | x | x | | | x | x | x | x |
| Assessment | x | | | x | x | | | x | | x | x | x |
| Collaboration | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Decisions | x | x | | x | x | | x | x | | x | x | |
| Standards | | x | | x | x | | | | | x | x | |
| Assessment | x | x | x | x | | | | x | | x | x | x |

*Intent items; others are current practice items.

The most serious discrepancies reflected in Table 3 are found in the perceptions of the role of the DPI by coordinators and directors and that of DPI representatives. Coordinators did not acknowledge that DPI had either decision making, standard setting, nor assessment functions. DPI representatives reported DPI decision making power in In-Service Education, responsibility for assessment in all areas, and standard setting in all areas, except Collaboration. Directors agreed that DPI had a standard setting role but saw DPI limited to assessment only in In-Service Education and agreed with the coordinator that DPI had no decision making power at all. The Evaluation Committee's expectations regarding goal setting were seriously out of focus.

Interpretative Summary

While all may agree that those involved in ABE should have a degree of freedom to "march to a different drummer" in expressing their creative individuality; discrepancies reported here suggest a fundamental problem in keeping those involved from marching off in different directions altogether. These differences in perception are not academic in their implications. Unless those charged with planning and implementing ABE can agree on a common set of program goals and priorities, there is little possibility of successful collaborative efforts to improve instruction, supervision, and in-service education, or to establish relevant criteria for program evaluation. When all those involved are working on a different set of assumptions about what is of importance a coordinative effort to improve program quality becomes virtually impossible. When there is little agreement about who is responsible for the essential functions of determining program priorities, it is inevitable that

wasteful duplication of effort and potential conflict will result. In the findings reported in this section, these problems not only pertain among coordinators, directors, teachers, the DPI, and the Evaluation Committee but also within each of these groups (except the Committee) to a marked degree.

In particular, there is the widest possible variance in the importance assigned Preparation for High School Equivalency Exam, both between groups and within both coordinator and teacher groups. Moreover, just half the students report that earning a high school diploma is their most important reason for being in the program -- clearly an important goal, but not overwhelmingly so in the eyes of the students. Implications for curriculum and instruction as well as evaluating student progress will be significantly influenced by the priority assigned this goal.

There is little agreement among teachers, coordinators, directors, and the Evaluation Committee on the relative importance of Increased Competency in Language and Computational Skills or on Achievement of Short Term Goals in the program. Coordinators and teachers each disagree within their own group of peers about the relative importance of Increased Ability to Cope with Adult Life Roles and Problems. DPI representatives have widely divergent views among themselves about the relative importance of almost all of the six major influences on the program.

Perhaps even more alarming are the discrepancies in identifying who, in fact, is charged with what responsibility in the eyes of coordinators, directors, the DPI, and the Evaluation Committee. Remarkable lack of agreement is found within each group (except the Committee). On almost every question put to the coordinators, directors, and the DPI there was

the widest variation in responses. The reports of inter-group differences in perspective is predicated upon only a majority response within each group.

The extent of the confusion over roles is reflected in attributing responsibility for the crucial function of decision making. In matters of recruitment, coordinators and the DPI said the directors had no major responsibility. In staffing, instruction, and in-service education, the DPI reported that the directors were without responsibility, and the Committee felt this was appropriate. The coordinators reported that the directors had responsibility for staffing and in-service education but not for instruction. However, the directors reported that they had decision making responsibilities in all program areas. The DPI reported that it was responsible for decision making in the area of in-service education, and the Committee indicated that this was appropriate; neither the coordinator nor the directors agreed.

In assessing recruitment efforts, the Committee thought responsibility should be shared among the coordinators, directors, and the DPI. The DPI reported that this was in fact the way it was in practice; coordinators and directors excluded the DPI from responsibility sharing. The Committee said that assessing staffing practice should be the responsibility of the coordinator alone. The Coordinator said that, in practice, they shared responsibility with the directors. The directors said this responsibility was theirs alone. The DPI reported that it shared responsibility with the coordinators and directors. The DPI reported that it shared responsibility for assessment in every program area, but the coordinators and directors excluded the DPI in every area. The coordinators and directors each reported that only they assessed instruction. The Committee saw this as a function of the coordinators alone. There was no agreement

whatsoever when it came to assigning responsibility for assessing in-service education -- the directors said they alone had responsibility, the coordinators said they shared responsibility with the directors, and the DPI reported it also shared the responsibility. The Committee said this should be a function of the coordinators alone. Each group, the coordinators and the directors, reported that it alone was responsible for assessing collaboration. The DPI reported this responsibility was shared among itself and the other two groups, an arrangement in line with the expectations of the Committee.

The situation is even more confused about who is responsible for standard setting. What is urgently needed is a series of discussions within each of the groups involved and between them on each issue raised. If there is to be a coherent and purposeful program at merged area and state levels, a series of staff conferences is clearly a priority to explore which of these dramatic differences in perception are only matters of definition and which represent fundamental differences in understanding. This process should be seen as a positive one of building a solid and explicit consensus both on goal priorities and on assignment of responsibility for formulating, implementing, and modifying them in light of a systematic assessment of progress.

It would be healthy for leaders in the program to also encourage an exchange of views among staff members about the assumptions which determine extent and nature of shared responsibility for the various functions of goal setting as described in the introduction to this section. How and why is responsibility for decision making, standard setting, and assessing progress allocated among coordinators, directors, teachers, the DPI, and

others in the manner that it is for recruitment, staffing, instruction, in-service education, and collaboration?

## INSTRUCTION

Teaching and learning are at the heart of the educational enterprise; they are dealt with here under the rubric of instruction. If this section is the most crucial part of our evaluation of ABE in Iowa, it is also the most complex. Much of the data in other sections of the report -- for example, the section on goals, deals directly or indirectly with instruction. Moreover, the extended analyses of the student questionnaire data and the learning center coordinator questionnaire data in Section III also bear directly on questions of teaching and learning.

This section addresses those questions related to instruction which were of concern to the Evaluation Committee. It is organized in eight sub-sections: (1) Facilities, which deals with types of facilities and locations; (2) Subject Matter Emphasis, dealing with what is taught and what should be taught; (3) Orientation, Assessment, and Testing, which is mainly concerned with what happens to the student when he enters the program and how progress is monitored thereafter; (4) The Independent Learning Center, which deals with various aspects of the ILC's role in Iowa's ABE program; (5) materials, which briefly considers the sources of instructional materials; (6) Instructional Methods, which deals with structure and process in the classroom environment; (7) Teacher's Counseling Role, a brief assessment based on responses to a single item; (8) Use of Paraprofessionals, covering both paid aides and volunteers.

Findings of central importance and their implications are summarized and discussed at the end of this section.

Facilities

The Evaluation Committee was interested in the location and degree of "cluster and scatter" of ABE facilities in the state of Iowa. The Committee felt that a variety of different kinds of facilities and locations should characterize Iowa ABE programs. The proportional distribution of ABE classes among different kinds of facilities that should obtain in Iowa was set forth by the Committee as follows: 35% in scattered outreach classes in facilities of co-sponsors; 25% in scattered classes in school buildings after school hours; 20% clustered classes held in a center both day and evening; 20% outreach classes in facilities of community organizations.

There was considerable variety in class location reported by coordinators in the 15 merged areas. For example, over half the coordinators reported 15% or less clustered classes held in a center during both day and evening hours; 4 reported about half their classes in such a facility, and one reported that three-fourth of his classes were held in a centralized facility, and 5 reported no such classes. The general picture across the state, however, comes close to the kind of diversity advocated by the Committee. Only two merged areas held more than two-thirds of their classes in any one of the four facility/location categories provided on the questionnaire. One, noted above, held 75% of its classes in a learning center and another reported holding 80% of its classes in various school buildings in the evening. The average percentage of ABE classes reported by the 18 coordinators for each of the four categories is as follows: 30% scattered classes in school buildings; 26% outreach classes in facilities of community organizations; 21% clustered classes

held in a center day and evening; 21% scattered outreach classes in co-sponsor facilities; and about 3% "other," such as classes held in teachers' homes. There are slightly fewer scattered outreach classes held in co-sponsor facilities than anticipated by the Evaluation Committee (35% vs. 21% in practice).

Subject Matter Emphasis

A primary concern of the Evaluation Committee was the emphasis given to various subject matter areas in Iowa's ABE program. It was taken for granted that the 3 R's are and should be strongly emphasized. Other subject matter areas were rank ordered by the Committee according to the amount of emphasis which should be given to them by teachers. Coping skills was ranked first, social studies/civics second, consumer education third, and health education fourth.

As expected, teachers reported very heavy emphasis on the 3 R's. 97% of teachers ranked reading and communication skills either first or second (mostly first), and 59% ranked math either first or second (mostly second). Other subjects did not fare well in comparison, although coping skills was ranked first or second by a fourth of the teachers followed by health (11%), consumer education (5%), and social studies (4%). Coordinators also reported that coping was given greater emphasis in practice than other subjects (other than the 3 R's). Teacher intended practice rankings did not differ much from current practice rankings. Coping was ranked first or second by 32% followed by health (7%), consumer education (6%), and social studies (4%). The upshot is that teachers agree with the Committee that coping should (and does) receive greater emphasis than other subjects, except for the 3 R's. However, social studies/civics

came in last in both current and intended practice rankings by teachers. The Committee felt it should receive considerably greater emphasis.

Data on subject matter emphasis was also secured from students. They reported that the 3 R's received by far the greatest emphasis by their teachers. Moreover, they indicated overwhelmingly that the 3 R's, especially reading, were the subjects that were "most important" to them. When asked "which would you like more emphasized in class?", 71% of students checked reading, writing, and math compared with 29% who checked "problems of everyday living." When asked "Would you like more class discussion about problems of jobs, consumer problems, health, family life, or public affairs?", 56% checked "yes," and 44% checked "no." Clearly, students tend to see the traditional 3 R's as not only emphasized by their teachers but important to them for whatever reasons they enroll in ABE. This is hardly surprising in view of the fact that half of Iowa's students say their main reason for coming to ABE is to earn a high school diploma. Nonetheless, it should be borne in mind that for every 7 students who would like more emphasis on the 3 R's, there are 3 who would prefer greater emphasis on problems of everyday living.

Orientation, Assessment and Testing

In the judgment of the Evaluation Committee, orientation of new students to ABE should be the responsibility of the teacher. Three fourths of the teachers surveyed indicated that this is the current practice in Iowa, and that orientation of new students should be primarily the responsibility of teachers. All but 3 coordinators reported that the teachers in their merged areas had primary responsibility for orienting students.

Initial assessment of an entering student's achievement level should, according to the Evaluation Committee, be accomplished by using assessment techniques in the following sequence: interview, previous records, locally developed tests, and standardized tests. Teachers agreed by and large on the importance of the interview, with two-thirds indicating that in practice it is the first step in the assessment process. However, a significant minority (33%) indicated that administration of a standardized test is the first step in the assessment process. Intended practice results were virtually identical, with two-thirds indicating that the interview should come first and about a fourth indicating that a standardized test should be the first step in assessing initial achievement level. All but two of the coordinators reported that the first step in assessment involves an interview. Coordinators reported the following sequence as most prevalent: interview, locally developed test, standardized test, and previous record. There was widespread variation in practice in sequencing, although almost all began with an interview.

While teachers and the Committee agree to a large extent that priority should be given to the interview, they differ substantially concerning the place of standardized tests in the assessment sequence. Only 20% of the teachers agree with the Evaluation Committee that standardized tests should come last in the assessment sequence. Moreover, teachers disagree among themselves about the place of standardized tests: about a fourth of the teachers say it should come first; another fourth say it should come second; and still another fourth say it should come third.

A similar split of opinion among teachers obtains for use of locally developed tests and previous records. While only a handful feel these

procedures should come first in the assessment sequence, roughly equal proportions say that local tests and records should come second, third or fourth. There is substantial evidence of disagreement among teachers concerning the preferred sequence of procedures for assessing an entering student's achievement level.

In a related item, the Evaluation Committee indicated that initial assessment of student skill levels should be made by the teacher rather than by the coordinator or other staff members. 89% of the teachers reported that in actual practice the teacher does make initial assessment of skill level, with 10% indicating that the coordinator performs this function. Intended practice data on this item revealed a similar distribution. Coordinators overwhelmingly agreed that teachers had primary responsibility for orienting new students.

In the judgment of the Evaluation Committee, diagnostic placement tests should be used in ABE programs in Iowa, but they should be administered "sometime after enrollment," not "at time of enrollment." This view, it might be noted, is consistent with the Committee's feeling that testing should be the last step in the initial assessment process. However, teacher reports of current practice substantially contradicted the Committee's expectation. 28% of teachers indicated that diagnostic placement tests are never administered, 42% stated they are administered at time of enrollment, and only 30% said such tests are given sometime after enrollment.

Coordinators also reported variability in current practice. 4 noted that placement tests are never used in their programs, 6 checked "at time of enrollment," and 8 indicated "sometime after enrollment."

Teacher intentions also diverged from the Committee's standards: 44% said tests should be administered at time of enrollment, 40% indicated sometime after enrollment, and 17% said tests should never be used. Again a large proportion of teachers are at odds with the Committee concerning the use of tests. And once again, teachers disagree among themselves about how tests should be used for initial diagnosis and placement. It might be noted that while 28% of teachers report that tests are never used for diagnostic placement purposes, only 17% say that such tests should not be used.

The Evaluation Committee felt that tests (both standardized and teacher developed) should not be emphasized for assessing student progress once the student is enrolled. Instead, the Committee felt that periodic review of student progress should emphasize the following procedures: (1) Teacher summary review (first priority); (2) Student-teacher conference (second priority); and (3) Staff conference (third priority). Teachers agreed (82%) that in practice staff conferences are third priority, but they were about evenly divided between those who felt that teacher-student conferences and summary review by the teacher are given highest priority in assessing student progress. Intended practice data also showed something of a split, with high agreement (88%) that staff conferences should rank third, but with 59% ranking teacher-student conferences first and 40% ranking teacher summary evaluations first. While the Committee felt that unilateral evaluation by the teacher of student progress should be emphasized, a majority of teachers seemed to feel that students should be involved in the process.

The Evaluation Committee felt that standardized achievement tests should

be used in Iowa, but they expressed the expectation that such tests be used flexibly and not administered routinely at regularly scheduled intervals (e.g., after 100 or 200 hours of instruction). Four-fifths of the teachers surveyed reported that, in line with the Committee's expectation, standardized tests are not administered at regularly scheduled intervals. Coordinators' reports were congruent with the teachers': only one coordinator stated that tests are administered at regular intervals in his merged area; one other said that such tests are never used in his program. But many teachers are apparently dissatisfied with the status quo in the testing area, slightly more than half think tests should be administered at regular intervals, compared with 48% who think otherwise. Once again, teachers are split among themselves regarding testing and once again a large proportion reject the standard of practice determined by the Evaluation Committee.

In evaluating student progress the Evaluation Committee felt that the following three sources of information should be considered important in the following order of emphasis: (1) summary review by teacher, (2) student-teacher conference, and (3) staff conference. Two-thirds or more of the coordinators reporting on current practice reversed the order, placing first emphasis on student-teacher conference, second on teacher review. In reporting current practice teachers were evenly divided, half assigning first priority to teacher review, half to student-teacher conference. When asked which of these procedures should receive priority, teachers favored student-teacher conferences over

over summary teacher review (59% and 40% respectively).

A substantial majority of teachers also ranked the priority which should be given three practices pertaining to periodic reviews of student progress. Teacher observation was first, teacher developed classroom tests was second, and standardized achievement tests third. However, 29% placed first priority on tests, most of these on standardized achievement tests. In reporting current practice, teachers indicated the same order of priority, but for 50% standardized achievement tests were a first or second priority.

In the matter of how students records should be used, the Evaluation Committee indicated that great emphasis (scored 5 on 1-5 scale) should be put on records for the following purposes: Refer students to other programs, employers, etc., and prepare reports for ABE coordinator; moderately great emphasis (scored 4) should be put on use of records to evaluate student progress in program and counsel students; finally, some emphasis (scored 3) should be placed on using records to place students in class.

Only a minority of teachers indicated that moderate to great emphasis (score of 4 or 5) was put on student records for any of these purposes. 36% indicated moderately great to great emphasis was placed on use of records to counsel students, 31% to refer students to other programs, employers, etc., and 19% to place students in class. According to teachers, then, records, when used at all, are used mainly for counseling and evaluating students. In contrast, the Committee felt that the greatest emphasis should be placed on use of records to refer students to other programs and prepare reports.

Current practice reports from coordinators showed great variability in the emphasis given to use of student records for the purposes noted above. Nearly two fifths of the coordinators reported little or no emphasis placed on records for placing students in class, and the same proportion report that relatively great emphasis is placed on records in preparing reports for the coordinator. Since coordinators' ratings were distributed about evenly over the full scale range for each item, the only conclusions that can be drawn are that coordinators do not report great emphasis on the uses of records stressed by the Committee and that practice varies considerably from one merged area to another.

Teacher intended practice data showed some discrepancy from what was reported as current practice. Nearly half (46%) the teachers felt that moderately great to great emphasis <u>should</u> be placed on using records to counsel students; 42% indicated similar emphasis should be placed on using records to refer students to other programs and employers; 34% emphasized use of records for evaluating student progress; 28% felt that records should be used for preparing reports; and only about a fourth of the teachers asserted that emphasis should be placed on records for placing students in class. In comparing teacher current and intended practice reports, there is a clear and statistically significant difference on two items: Teachers believe that greater emphasis should be placed on use of records to counsel students and especially to refer students to other programs, employers, etc. While teachers concur with the Committee that emphasis should be placed on using records for referral purposes, they disagree with the Committee that great emphasis should be placed on use of records for reporting to the coordinator.

The Independent Learning Center

The role of the independent learning centers (ILCs) in ABE instruction was the subject of a set of related items. Interestingly, while 15 of 18 coordinators stated that ILCs were available to their ABE students, only 42% of the teachers agreed that this was the case. The discrepancy may be due in some measure to the fact that teachers in outreach sites in merged areas that do have ILCs probably do not see these facilities as available to their students.

The Evaluation Committee felt that the ILC should be available to students who want to use it, but they rejected the proposition that it should play "a regular part in the student's total program" or be "used for remedial work for students referred by the teacher."

Teacher current practice data revealed that providing "individualized services for students who request them" was the role most commonly played by ILCs in the instruction of ABE students in Iowa (checked by 23% of the teachers whose students had access to ILCs). However, one-sixth of the teachers indicated that the ILCs do in fact "provide remedial work for students referred by me" and another 15% reported that the ILCs "provide instruction in designated content areas or skills as an integral part of the curriculum." About 10% checked each of several other possible functions of ILCs, such as providing diagnostic testing, periodic achievement testing, and counseling.

Coordinators agreed (12 of 15) with teachers that the most common role played by the ILC was to provide individualized services for students who request them. On the average, only half as many coordinators indicated that ILCs in their merged areas play other roles in ABE

instruction (remediation, instruction integral to curriculum, initial diagnosis) and only two reported that the ILC provides periodic achievement testing.

DPI staff also responded to this item, but were asked to rank order the options according to frequency of use by ABE students. Two of four DPI respondents ranked "provides individualized services" first, while the others ranked it second and third. "Provides remedial services" was ranked first by one, second by two, and fifth by another. "Provides instruction...as integral part of curriculum" was ranked first, second, third, and fourth -- a totally flat distribution indicating complete lack of agreement among state staff on this very important question.

Intended practice data indicated clearly that teachers think ILCs should play a much greater role in ABE instruction than they actually do at present. 40% of the teachers said ILCs should provide individualized services for students who request them (contrasted with 23% who said such services are currently provided); 30% said ILCs should provide remedial work, compared with only 17% who reported that ILCs currently provide remedial work; 28% felt ILCs should provide instruction as an integral part of the curriculum, but only 15% reported that this is now being done. Relatively few teachers (about one-sixth) felt that the ILCs should offer other services such as initial diagnosis, periodic achievement testing, and counseling. About 10% thought the ILC should play no role whatever in ABE instruction.

Additional data on the role the ILC does and should play in ABE instruction was obtained from ILC coordinators in 11 of the 15 merged areas (some areas had more than one ILC coordinator, others had none). Rather

strangely, there was a consistent pattern of response from the ILC coordinator indicating that the ILC plays a greater role in ABE instruction than it should play. For example, 20 ILC coordinators said their centers currently provide "individualized services for ABE students who request them," but only 8 indicated that the ILC should provide such services. A like pattern was found for every ILC function. Approximately twice as many ILC coordinators indicated that the ILC does provide services such as counseling, diagnostic and achievement testing, remediation, counseling, and instruction as part of the ABE curriculum than feel that the ILC should provide these services. (For a more detailed analysis of the ILC coordinator survey data, see Sect. 3.) Obviously, if teachers want the ILCs to play a greater role in ABE instruction, and ILC coordinators want the ILCs to play a less prominent role in ABE, there is reason to expect that conflict will ensue.

A further anomaly in regard to the ILC is that if teachers think it should play a greater role in ABE instruction, students apparently do not. When asked, "In what ways do you most like to learn?", two-thirds of the students ranked "in the learning center" as their last choice. Only 6% picked "learning center" as first choice, while 12% ranked it second and 14% ranked it third. This startling finding may be explained in part by the fact that many students have had little experience working in an ILC environment. Nonetheless, 23% of the students did not respond to the ILC option in this particular question. This high non-response rate suggests that the 23% had no experience of the ILC while most of the others probably did have some familiarity with a learning center. Thus it seems that students definitely do prefer self-study with the teacher

giving help as needed, small group learning, and even the traditional lecture approach over working independently in the ILC.

According to the Evaluation Committee, the student's work in the ILC should be planned collaboratively by the teacher and/or counselor with the student. This expectation is not what most teachers report as actually occurring. 42% of the teachers indicate that they themselves prescribe the student's work in the ILC. Collaborative planning with the center coordinator or counselor was reported by only 21% of the teachers. 17% said that ILC coordinator or instructor prescribed the student's work in the center.

Teacher intent data presents a very different picture. When teachers were asked how the student's work in the ILC should be planned, a majority (52%) checked the collaborative option, 19% said the student's work should be planned by the teacher, 10% indicated by ILC coordinator or instructor, 12% indicated "by the student," and 7% opted for the counselor. Thus only a fifth of the teachers report that the student's work in the ILC is currently planned collaboratively with ILC staff, whereas half the teachers feel that planning the student's work should be done collaboratively. This discrepancy is another indicator of potential conflict concerning the place of the ILC in Iowa's ABE program. The data suggest that teachers want to work collaboratively with ILC staff, but that this is not generally how things happen at present. Interestingly, a majority (8) of the ILC coordinators responding to the question reported that they or their staff prescribed the ABE student's work in the ILC. Collaborative planning was reported by 3 ILC coordinators, and 2 noted that the ABE teacher prescribed the students' work in the ILC.

Curriculum Materials

The Evaluation Committee felt that commercially published materials should generally not be used "as is," but rather should be adapted by the teacher for use in Iowa ABE classrooms. The Committee's expectations on the proportion of materials of various types that should be used in the ABE classroom are shown in Table 4 in conjunction with reports from teachers and coordinators.

Table 4

Instructional Materials by Category
(in mean percentages)

| Materials Category | Eval. Comm. | Coord. | Teachers Current | Teachers Intended |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Used as commercially published | 20% | 59% | 66% | 54% |
| 2. Adapted by teachers from commercial materials | 60% | 23% | 16% | 25% |
| 3. Developed by teacher | 15% | 11% | 13% | 14% |
| 4. Developed by local cooperative effort | 5% | 6% | 5% | 7% |

As Table 4 shows, there are wide discrepancies in the first two materials categories between the Committee and the coordinators and teachers. Teachers, in reporting current practice, indicated that the Committee's expectations are out of line with actual classroom practice in Iowa. Coordinators' reports corroborate those of the teachers. About one third of the coordinators reported that over 75% of materials were used as commercially published, and one third reported that 50% or less of the materials were used in this form. 69% of the coordinators who

reported the use of adapted materials indicated that 10%-30% of these materials were used. In two areas adapted materials were reported to represent 75% and 80% of the materials used. Teachers who reported their preferences concerning instructional materials also disagreed with the Evaluation Committee concerning the emphasis which should be given to teacher adaptation of commercial materials. Teachers as a group think that about half the materials they use should be used as commercially published, whereas the Committee's preference is for a much more modest 20%. The Committee's enthusiasm for teacher adaptation of commercial materials is evidently not shared by most teachers. There is, however, a slight trend for teachers to prefer more adaptation of commercial materials, but the divergence is slight between teacher assessment of what is and what should be regarding the nature of instructional materials.

Instructional Methods

The items in this section address directly the critical issues of structure and process in educational methods. The Evaluation Committee was keenly interested in the way the ABE classroom is organized to facilitate adult learning.

The pros and cons of a number of approaches to involving students in their own learning were weighed, with the Committee preferring the more active individual and small group approaches to the more traditional and passive lecture/recitation format. The following ways of facilitating student learning were selected as "preferred" by the Committee, which subsequently rank ordered them by importance as follows: One-to-one instructional interaction with teachers (first), pairs or small groups of

students practice skills together (second), small groups participate in discussion and problem solving (third), use of programmed materials (fourth), and use of simulated learning situations such as games and role playing (fifth). An additional option, not selected as preferred by the Committee, was added to the teacher and coordinator questionnaires: "Through planning and evaluating their [student's] educational experiences."

Teacher current practice reports showed great variability in the extent to which these instructional approaches were utilized in the state of Iowa. There was considerable agreement, however, that one-to-one instruction is by far the most widely employed technique, with 58% ranking it first in frequency of use and 19% ranking it second. There was also agreement that use of simulated learning situations is relatively infrequent: About two-thirds of the teachers ranked this approach fifth or sixth in frequency of use. Participation by students in planning and evaluating their educational experiences was also rated as infrequent in practice, with two-thirds ranking it either fourth, fifth, or sixth.

In general, teachers think the current pattern of emphasis on various instructional approaches is what should prevail in ABE classrooms. Exactly the same proportion of teachers indicated that one-to-one instruction should be ranked first or second as ranked it first or second in describing actual practice. Likewise, there was little difference between current and intended practice regarding the relative importance of programmed materials, discussion groups, simulation, and so on.

In comparing current practice with what teachers think should

obtain in Iowa classrooms, the only item which shows a statistically significant difference is the technique of using pairs or small groups of students to practice skills together (note this is not the same as using small groups for discussion and problem solving). While only 6% reported this method first in frequency of use in actual practice, 16% said it should rank first in frequency of use in Iowa classrooms. Conversely, 24% reported that use of pairs or small groups for skills practice ranked either fifth or sixth in actual practice but only 13% thought this approach to instruction should rank fifth or sixth in frequency of use. The Committee considered this technique as high priority (ranked second); consequently, the trend for teachers to prefer more emphasis on groups for skills practice is in line with Committee expectations.

While the current practice data reveal a great deal of diversity in teaching methods, what is perhaps more significant is that teachers generally do not agree on the amount of emphasis which should be given to alternative instructional methods. Teachers substantially agree in reporting both practice and preference on only two items: that one-to-one instruction is and should be emphasized and that simulation techniques are not and should not be emphasized. There is considerable divergence in teacher opinion about how much emphasis should be placed on other instructional techniques.

Coordinators' reports of current practice were congruent with those of the teachers, all ranking one-to-one instruction as either first or second in actual practice (11 ranked first, 5 second). Disagreement on the other methods was similar to that reported by teachers.

Students were asked a modified version of the same question: "In

what ways do you most like to learn?" "Through self-study, with teacher giving help as needed" was ranked first by a large majority (60%), followed by "in the class divided into small groups" (26% first, 43% second); and "with all the students in the class as a whole" (15% first, 21% second); and "in the learning center" (6% first, 12% second). Like their teachers and like the Evaluation Committee, students prefer one-to-one individualized instruction, but they are more inclined than their teachers to reject the totally individualized environment of the learning center.

A closely related question had to do with techniques for accommodating differences among students. The Evaluation Committee indicated that the greatest emphasis should be placed on one-to-one instruction in the classroom and on making individual reading, writing, or math assignments. Moderately great emphasis, the Committee felt, should be placed on "grouping students with similar problems and interests together" and "sending students to the learning center." The Committee indicated further that "use of programmed materials" should receive only a moderate or average degree of emphasis and that "tutoring outside of classroom" should receive moderately low emphasis.

Fifteen of 18 coordinators reported that in practice greatest emphasis is placed on one-to-one instruction. Making individual assignments was reported by 10 of 18 coordinators as receiving at least moderately great emphasis, while 13 coordinators rated "group students with similar problems or interests together" as receiving at least moderately great emphasis. Only 2 coordinators reported that sending students to the learning center was strongly emphasized as a way to accommodate student differences, while 9 reported this approach received little or no emphasis. For the other methods listed (tutor outside

class, use programmed materials), coordinators' reports varied, with about half indicating at least moderate emphasis and the other half little or no emphasis.

DPI staff were also asked to respond to this item. One staff member indicated moderately little emphasis on one-to-one instruction in actual practice, while the others reported moderately great or great emphasis. Interestingly, DPI staff were split on the emphasis given to independent learning centers, with 2 reporting moderately little emphasis and 2 reporting moderately great emphasis. The coordinators, it will be recalled, indicated comparatively little emphasis on the ILCs. DPI opinion was divided on most of the other methods, although responses tended to cluster around the middle range of the scales. An exception was "tutor outside classroom," which 3 of 4 DPI staff rated as receiving little emphasis.

By and large teacher reports of current practice were in agreement with coordinators and did not diverge greatly from the expectations of the Evaluation Committee. Thus nearly all the teachers stated that one-to-one instruction was greatly emphasized and about three-fifths reported moderately great to great emphasis on making individual assignments (ranked second by Committee), and grouping students with similar problems/interests together (ranked third by Committee). However, while three-fifths of the teachers indicated moderately great to great emphasis on use of programmed materials, the Committee felt that this technique <u>should</u> receive only average emphasis. On one item there was great divergence: While the Committee felt that moderately great emphasis should be placed on sending students to the learning center, only 9% of the teachers reported equally great emphasis in practice.

Teacher intended practice reports concerning accommodating student differences showed a pattern of preference not too different from actual practice in Iowa's classrooms. The one major discrepancy also involved the role of the independent learning center. While 86% of teachers describing current practice indicated little or no emphasis is placed on the ILC, only 60% indicated that comparably little emphasis should be placed on the ILC. While this is certainly a sizeable difference (and in the direction desired by the Evaluation Committee), its meaning should be kept in perspective. Only 15% of teachers think the ILC should receive moderately great emphasis and about a fourth think it should receive an average or moderate amount of emphasis. Teachers, then, are not as enthusiastic as the Committee concerning the potential role of the ILC in helping to accommodate differences among students.

Other differences were found between intended and current practice which, while statistically significant at the .05 level or beyond, are from a practical standpoint so slight in magnitude as to be of negligible importance. Using current practice as the base of comparison, teachers felt that (1) more emphasis should be placed on grouping students with similar problems/interests; (2) more emphasis should be placed on making individual reading, writing or math assignments; (3) more emphasis should be placed on tutoring outside classroom; (4) more emphasis should be put on use of programmed materials.

Patterns of teacher/student interaction in the classroom were also of concern to the Evaluation Committee. Among a number of options considered, the Committee agreed that greatest emphasis should be given to "instructor rotates according to a pre-established plan." A moderate

degree of emphasis should be given to "instructor rotates at random" and "instructor comes to student at student's initiative." The Committee felt that little emphasis should be given to "student comes to instructor at instructor's initiative" and "student comes to instructor at student's initiative."

Teachers reported that by far the greatest emphasis in current practice is placed on the instructor rotating at random (ranked first or second by 79%). "Instructor comes to student at student's initiative" was seen by teachers as receiving second greatest emphasis in practice (66% ranked this first or second, mostly second). There was a very large discrepancy between the Committee and teacher reports on the option "instructor rotates among students according to pre-established plan." While this procedure was ranked first by the Committee, virtually no teachers ranked it first -- in fact 60% ranked it last. Half of the teachers who were asked what pattern of contact <u>should</u> pertain also ranked this pattern last. They, too, preferred random rotation (ranked fist by 44%) followed by the instructor coming to the student at the student's initiative (26%) and the student coming to the instructor at the student's initiative (20%). Thus there was little discrepancy between current and intended practice as reported by teachers but there was considerable discrepancy between the teachers and the Evaluation Committee concerning the emphasis which is and should be given to the pattern of teacher rotation according to a pre-established plan.

A large proportion of coordinators' also report random rotation as the prevailing pattern of instructional interaction, and most ranked rotation according to a plan fourth or fifth. The only procedure ranked

lower by coordinators was that of the student coming to the instructor at the instructor's initiative.

Teacher's Counseling Role

The Evaluation Committee believed that counseling should be an important and integral part of the ABE teacher's role. Specifically, the Committee indicated that "Helping students with personal and vocational problems" should be of moderately great importance in the teacher's role in Iowa's ABE program.

Teacher current practice reports revealed that counseling is seen by a majority of teachers as important to their role in their classroom. A fifth of the teachers reported that they placed great emphasis on counseling (circled 5 on 1-5 scale) and another third reported moderately great emphasis. Only 12 percent report little or no emphasis on counseling in their role as teacher.

State DPI staff were also queried about the importance of counseling. All agreed that it plays an important part in the work of ABE teachers in Iowa. All but 3 of the coordinators also agreed that counseling students on personal and vocational problems is an important part of the teacher's job.

Teachers felt, too, that they should help students with personal and vocational problems. There was not, however, any great difference between the degree of importance which teachers said they actually placed on counseling and the degree of importance which teachers said should be placed on counseling. About two-thirds of the teachers indicated that counseling should be an important or very important part of their job; about ten percent disagreed, and the remainder indicated counseling should

be considered of average or moderate importance. Thus most teachers agree with the Evaluation Committee that counseling should be emphasized as an important part of the teacher role.

Use of Paraprofessionals

The Evaluation Committee was interested in the role of the paraprofessional (both aides and volunteers), even though the use of paraprofessionals in Iowa is not yet widespread. Only 14% of Iowa's ABE teachers reported using aides in their classrooms. 14% of the total sample of teachers is 42, which means that this is the total number of paraprofessionals working in ABE in Iowa if it is assumed that each teacher has one aide. 12 teachers described their aides as volunteers, 21 as paid paraprofessionals, and 9 as neither volunteers nor paid paraprofessionals but considered them to be in some other category. When asked how they used their aides, about half the teachers indicated "mostly as co-teacher," and slightly less than half checked "mostly tutors individuals." Only 2 teachers reported that their aides were used mostly for non-teaching tasks.

The Committee was concerned with the allocation of the aide's time in performing various tasks. According to the Committee, an aide (paid or volunteer) in Iowa should allocate her time as follows: 18% to clerical work; 5% to housekeeping chores; 5% to childcare; 12% to counseling; 10% to recruiting students; and 50% to instruction-related tasks.

As might be expected, teachers report that aides generally devote nearly all their time to instruction. Four-fifth of the teachers indicated that 80% or more of their aide's time is devoted to instruction.

The other teachers indicated varying amounts of time for instruction, with none reporting that their aides spend no time on instruction-related tasks. Only a handful of teachers reported that their aides spend any time at all on clerical, housekeeping, childcare or recruitment tasks. About half report that their aides spend at least some time on counseling, with three teachers in this group noting that their aides spend half or more of their time counseling students.

Coordinators agreed with teachers on the pattern of aide use in ABE classrooms. Of the 10 coordinators who reported that aides were used in their merged areas, only one indicated that the aides devoted less than half time to instructional duties.

Teacher intended practice data show the same pattern reported above: four-fifths of the teachers say that aides should spend 80% or more of their time on instructional tasks. About half the teachers said aides should spend some time (between 10 and 40%) on clerical tasks.

The overall picture seems clear. Almost all aides in Iowa spend most of their time on instruction-related tasks. Moreover, teachers agree that this is the way aides should spend their time. The Committee saw the ideal, "composite aide" as a jack of all trades spending half her time on tasks other than teaching. Contrary to the Committee's expectations, very few aides in Iowa devote more than a fraction of their time to non-teaching tasks.

The Evaluation Committee was interested in the way in which aides were used for instruction-related tasks. It felt that half the aide's total instructional time should be spend on individual tutoring, 48% on working with small groups of students, and a negligible 2% on teaching the class as a whole.

The actual distribution of aide instructional time as reported by teachers diverges very little from the Committee's standard. Nearly two-fifths of the teachers reported that their aides spend exactly half their instructional time tutoring individuals. Only a handful of teachers report their aides spending no time or all their time on individual tutoring. The distribution of aide time reported for working with small groups of students was similar, with a slightly lower proportion indicating that half or more of the aide's time is spent in group work. Nearly all teachers reported that their aides spend little or no time teaching the class as a whole.

Coordinators report pretty much what teachers do concerning the use of the aide's instructional time. Coordinators indicated that aides spend an average of two-thirds of their time tutoring individuals and one-third working with small groups. Two coordinators reported that aides spend 10% of their instructional time teaching the class as a whole.

No meaningful difference could be detected between the teachers report as current practice regarding use of aide instructional time and what teachers indicate <u>should</u> be the proportion of time aides devote to different instructional methods. Teachers generally felt that aides should divide their time between individual tutoring and groups, with somewhat more emphasis on individual tutoring.

<u>Interpretative Summary</u>

There was a generally high degree of consensus between teachers and coordinators concerning current practice in Iowa's ABE classrooms. Coordinators appear generally to be aware of instructional practices in

their merged areas. Their corroboration of the teachers reconfirms that our benchmark data on practice reflect the current realities of instruction in Iowa.

There are substantial discrepancies among the Evaluation Committee's expectations, teacher reports of current practice, and most important, teacher opinion concerning what should obtain regarding instructional practice in ABE. Teacher and Committee expectations diverge on several important matters related to instruction.

Perhaps the most interesting and significant discrepancies are those within groups. Teachers and coordinators reach report wide variations in the instructional process in current practice. Some degree of variability on certain items would be expected since circumstances differ between merged areas and one would expect to find these differences reflected in instructional practice. Nonetheless, it is hard to see why, for example, standardized achievement tests are appropriate for some merged areas and not for others or why small group instruction should be a priority in one part of Iowa and not in another section of the state. Not only do teachers report that they do things differently in actual practice, but they often reveal wide variation in opinion concerning what should be the norm in classroom practice. Lack of some degree of consensus among teachers about, for example, what should be the place of standardized tests in ABE, indicates a fundamental issue in educational practice.

## PROBLEM AREAS

### A. What Should Be Taught?

For the most part, ABE in Iowa places heavy emphasis on teaching the 3 R's. This is hardly surprising in light of the fact that half of the students give earning a high school diploma as their principal reason for enrolling in ABE. The question is, are important subject areas related to problems of everyday living neglected?

Our data do not provide a clear answer. Social studies and civics is ranked least important by teachers in both current and intended practice. The Evaluation Committee, however, felt that considerable emphasis should be given to this subject, at least in comparison to other non-traditional subjects such as consumer education and health education.

A sizeable minority of students appear to be dissatisfied with the current heavy emphasis on the 3 R's. When asked, "Which would you like emphasized more in class?", 29% checked problems of everyday living and 71% checked reading, writing, and math. When asked, "Would you like more class discussion about problems of jobs, consumer problems, health, family life, or public affairs?" a majority (56%) responded affirmatively.

An implication of these findings is that consideration might be given to organize separate groups and develop alternative curricula when feasible, organize separate classes for those students who want instruction in the 3 R's to pass the GED exam (or for some other reason) and those who have different reasons for enrolling in ABE (e.g., self-improvement) and might prefer greater emphasis on coping skills and other "life-related" subject matter. There is every argument for teaching the basic skills through life-related subject matter.

B. How Should Undereducated Adults Be Taught?

Teachers disagree about the relative merits of various instructional methods. Of six teaching methods listed, teachers agreed on only two: one-to-one instruction should be given great emphasis and simulated learning situations should be given little or no emphasis. But on other items, especially use of programmed materials and use of small groups for skills practice or for discussion and problem solving, teachers indicated widely varying preferences. Why do a third of the teachers in Iowa think that programmed materials should receive little or no emphasis, and another third think they should receive great emphasis? The same question might be asked about use of learning groups. Clearly these are issues which need to be addressed by teachers and coordinators in the context of future staff development efforts.

The low esteem in which simulated learning situations are held by teachers precludes the use of role playing and case study, two teaching methods of established value in adult education for coping skills and other related subject matter related to the problems of everyday living. The lack of popularity of these methods suggests a lack of familiarity with their use which should be rectified. That well over half the teachers report limited or no use of the method of encouraging students to participate in planning or evaluating their own learning and over 40% report relatively little use of group discussion and problem solving adds to the impression of a limited and traditional mode of instruction not uncommon in childhood education but seldom recommended in adult education. Fortunately, teachers recognize their need for in-service education pertaining to instructional methods.

Teachers disagreed concerning the patterns of teacher/student interaction which should be stressed in ABE classrooms. For example, the

pattern of the student coming to the instructor for assistance when the student feels the need was ranked first, second, third and fourth in desired emphasis by approximately the same proportion of teachers. There was some divergence, too, concerning desired emphasis on other patterns. While recognizing that there should be room for variation in teacher style, the limited use of coaching, master-novice assignments, classroom visitation, cooperative planning, and group interaction among teachers suggest that the disagreement reported about teaching reflects a lack of awareness and experience in using patterns and methods of instruction different from what is most familiar.

An important finding is that teachers reject the Evaluation Committee's expectation that rotation according to a pre-established plan should receive greatest emphasis. A large majority of teachers think this technique should receive <u>least</u> emphasis. Why did the Committee consider planned rotation among students so important and why do teachers consider it of so little promise? This is another question which deserves further exploration by those responsible for staff development. Planned innovations in instructional approaches should be encouraged through Iowa's program of experimentation and demonstration. Superior current practices should be identified and a systematic plan for fostering broader utilization put into effect with appropriate incentives.

C. <u>What is the Place of Tests and Testing in ABE?</u>

Probably it should come as no surprise, but the issue of tests and how and when they should be used is one of the greatest sources of conflict among teachers and between teachers and the Evaluation Committee.

There are three different areas of disagreement concerning tests:

(1) how they fit into the initial assessment process; (2) when, if ever, diagnostic placement tests should be given; (3) and whether or not standardized achievement tests should be administered at regular intervals to evaluate student progress.

Concerning the first area of controversy, the Evaluation Committee felt that standardized tests should come last in a sequence of initial assessment procedures which should begin with an interview followed by review of student records and administration of a locally developed placement test. While two-thirds of the teachers agreed with the Committee that standardized tests should come last in this sequence, the remaining third felt that standardized tests should be administered first, not last. In a related item, teachers were asked when standardized tests should be administered, if at all. The Committee stipulated "sometime after enrollment," but many teachers disagreed: 44% said tests should be administered concurrently with enrollment and 17% said they should never be administered.

The extent of disagreement among teachers on the uses of standardized tests for initial diagnosis and placement is enormous. This is an issue which needs to be resolved, if not on a statewide basis, at least within each of the 15 merged areas. Tests and testing have advantages and disadvantages which need study and discussion prior to formulation of a coherent policy on diagnostic testing for each of the merged area programs.

Teachers not only disagree about the use of tests for initial diagnosis and placement, but they disagree too about the desirability of achievement testing at regularly scheduled intervals. The Evaluation Committee stated that achievement tests should be administered as needed on a flexible basis, but that they should not be administered regularly at periodic intervals. While four-fifths of the teachers confirmed that

in practice standardized tests are not administered at regular intervals, about half reported that they should be administered regularly while the other half reported that they should not be administered at periodic intervals. Thus half the ABE teachers in Iowa reject the current policy in most merged areas of not administering tests on a regularly scheduled basis.

Achievement testing is another knotty issue which needs attention at both the state and local program levels. ABE in Iowa puts great stress on the 3 R's and on preparation for the GED exam. One would expect, given the prominence of these goals, that achievement testing would be emphasized as a way of evaluating the effectiveness of instruction in reading and math. Such testing is not being done in most of the merged areas, but a great many teachers think it should be. The cooperative development of models of effective testing programs would represent a desirable area for an experimental and demonstration project.

D. What Kinds of Instructional Materials Should be Used?

The Evaluation Committee asserted that commercially published materials should rarely be used "as is," but rather adapted by the teacher for local use. According to the Committee, 60% of the materials used in ABE should be adapted by the teacher and only 20% should be used as commercially published. Teachers, however, strongly disagree. On the average, teachers stated that 54% of the materials they use should be commercially published and only 25% adapted by them from commercial sources. They did agree with the Committee that about 15% should be teacher-developed from scratch (as opposed to adapted).

What does this large discrepancy signify? There are two probable but not mutually exclusive explanations. Teachers may feel that a large proportion of commercially available materials are perfectly suitable for use in ABE classrooms without modification. In addition, teachers may believe that they do not have the time required to adapt commercial materials for local use to the extent advocated by the Evaluation Committee. These questions need exploration at the local program level. If lack of time is a problem, it might be highly desirable for local programs to provide the time needed for teachers to work on curriculum and materials development. It is relevant to note here that teachers did express a preference for less use of "as is" commercial materials. While teachers reported that in practice an average of 66% of their materials were used as commercially published, they said that the average proportion of such materials should be 54%.

E. What Should Be the Role of the ILC?

Along with testing, the role of the independent learning center emerged as a major problem area related to instruction. The Committee appeared to feel that the ILC should play a very limited role in ABE; i.e., it should simply provide individualized services for those students who request them.

Although teachers generally reported that in practice the ILCs play relatively little part in ABE instruction, a substantial proportion indicated that they should play a much greater role. For example, 40% of the teachers said that ILC should provide individualized services to students who want them, but only 23% of teachers said that the ILCs currently provide this service. Similarly, 30% said the ILC should provide

remedial work (vs. 17% in practice) and 28% stated that ILC should provide instruction as an integral part of the curriculum (vs. 15% in practice).

The data lead to these conclusions: (1) a substantial minority of teachers want the ILC to play a much greater role in ABE than that envisioned by the Evaluation Committee; (2) there is a large gap between what the ILCs provide at present and what many teachers think the ILCs should provide; (3) and there is a division of opinion among teachers concerning what roles the ILCs should play in ABE, for example, some stressing remediation and others stressing developmental instruction as a core part of the curriculum.

The problem of the ILCs' role is further compounded by the fact that most ILC coordinators feel that the ILC should play a less prominent role in ABE than it does at present. For example, 20 ILC coordinators reported that they currently provide individualized service for ABE students who request them, but only 8 indicated that the ILC should provide these services.

A further indicator of trouble in regard to the ILCs relates to who does and who should plan the student's work in the learning center. Only 21% of the teachers reported that the student's work is planned collaboratively by the teacher and by ILC staff; however, 52% of the teachers indicated that the student's work should be planned collaboratively by the teacher and the center instructor or coordinator.

The pattern of discrepancy revealed in the data discussed above point to very serious problems (or potential problems) regarding the role of the ILC in Iowa's ABE program. In some merged areas there may be no serious difficulties. But for the state as a whole it is clear that the

linkage between the ILCs and the area ABE program is not working very well. There is an urgent need for the DPI to take leadership in diagnosing the causes of the problem and in formulating action steps to resolve current difficulties before they become even more severe.

F. How Should Paraprofessionals Be Used?

At present there are approximately 42 paid and volunteer aides working in Iowa's ABE classroom. While only 14% of the state's teachers now have aides, the Committee seemed to feel that in the future more emphasis would be placed on the use of paraprofessionals. If this is the case, there is a need for DPI staff, area coordinators and teachers to consider how aides can best contribute to local programs.

The Evaluation Committee felt that aides should be jacks-of-all-trades, devoting half-time to instruction-related tasks and the remainder of their time to such duties as childcare, recruitment, clerical work, and housekeeping. The great majority of teachers reported, however, that 80% or more of their aide's time is devoted to instruction. Moreover, teachers felt that a comparable proportion of the aide's time should be devoted to instruction.

Why do classroom aides spend nearly all their time on instruction-related tasks, mostly tutoring individuals and working with small groups? Is this desirable or undesirable? Is there a need for in-service training so that aides could perform other tasks? Should the aide role be more highly formalized, with some assigned to clerical duties, others as teaching assistants, and still others to recruitment, community liaison, and childcare responsibilities? These questions may not be crucial at the present time. But if an expansion of the use of

paraprofessionals is contemplated, and both the Evaluation Committee and the coordinators place a high value on them in the program, then careful attention should be given to the development of policies and procedures designed to ensure their optimal use.

## RECRUITMENT

An analysis of recruitment and retention should answer four basic questions. First, has recruitment been a problem for the system, and if so to what degree? Second, what priorities have been established for recruitment and have these priorities been achieved in actual practice? Third, what recruitment strategies were intended and to what extent have they been used in actual practice; and fourth, to what extent has the program been successful in retaining its students?

### The Recruitment Problem

Data from the coordinator's questionnaire indicated that in general, Iowa's ABE program has been quite successful in recruiting an adequate number of students. Although coordinators overwhelmingly agreed (81%) that current enrollment in their areas was as high as budgetary resources permit, the three DPI representatives who responded to this item all disagreed. However satisfied coordinators were with level of current enrollment, when asked, "In the day-to-day operation of your program, what things concern you the most?", recruitment was most frequently mentioned. This may be explained by the fact that over 41 percent reported that they encountered difficulty in reaching the kinds of students they want.

When asked to list the general characteristics of the target population which <u>should</u> be reached in Iowa, the Evaluation Committee responded, "Anyone over the age of 16 who can benefit from and who perceives the need for improved communication and computational skills." From the student questionnaire it was determined that the average age of respondents is 32. Only one student is below the age of 16. This indicates that the age

criteria is being met. The second two portions of the general recruitment criteria are more difficult to assess. The two parts are: to recruit those who can benefit from and perceive the need for improved computation and communication skills. Data from students shows that communication and computational skills are indeed central to their learning objectives. When asked which one subject (out of six choices) they would prefer to learn more about in class, 64% of the respondents chose either reading or mathematics. 36% of the respondents indicated that either reading, writing, or speaking was of first or second importance to them out of the six subject matter choices, and 75% indicated that mathematics was of first or second importance. Similarly, when asked what they would like emphasized more in class, 71% of the student respondents chose reading, writing, or arithmetic. Clearly, the Evaluation Committee's general recruitment priority has been achieved in practice.

The Evaluation Committee was also asked to specify which ABE target groups the State of Iowa was especially trying to reach. First priority was assigned to students of the 0-4 grade level, second priority was assigned to students of the 5-8 grade level, and students of the 9-12 grade level were assigned third priority -- in line with the State Plan. When ABE coordinators were asked where they actually did assign priority, the following picture emerged:

Table 5

Coordinators' Recruitment Priorities
(N = 18)

| Recruitment Category | Low Priority | Medium Priority | High Priority |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-4 grade level | 0 | 2 | 15 |
| 5-8 grade level | 0 | 2 | 15 |
| 9-12 grade level | 0 | 6 | 12 |
| Unemployed | 0 | 3 | 14 |
| Rural adults | 1 | 2 | 15 |
| Young adults | 3 | 5 | 10 |
| Urban adults | 3 | 2 | 13 |
| Institutionalized adults | 3 | 3 | 10 |
| Migrants | 7 | 4 | 8 |

With the exception of migrants, the majority of coordinators place high priority on recruiting all the groups mentioned. Though this data does not necessarily conflict with the Evaluation Committee intended practice expectations, it does indicate that coordinators tend to place high priority on recruiting a greater range of groups.

An important issue is the degree to which grade level recruitment priorities have actually been reflected in enrollments. One set of data relevant to this issue is the percentage of classes taught at each grade level. Table 6 presents data from the teacher questionnaire.

Table 6

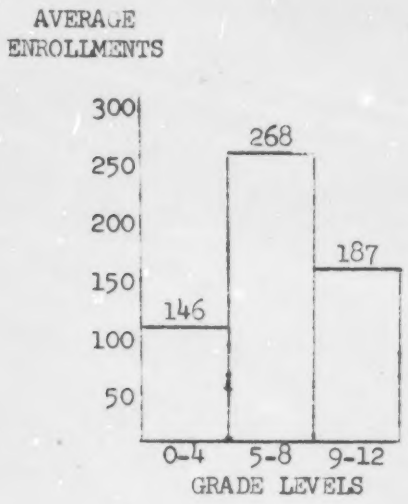
Teachers Conducting Classes by Grade Level
(by percentage)

| Grade Level | Proportion of Teachers |
|---|---|
| 0-4 beginning | 12 |
| 5-8 intermediate | 15 |
| 9-12 advanced | 26 |
| mixed classes | 47 |

Excluding the "mixed" category, the data shows that advanced classes outnumber beginning and intermediate classes nearly two to one. This clearly conflicts with grade level expectations but may be misleading in that the number of students per class are not taken into account. Perhaps more valid are the results to a question which asked coordinators for actual current (as opposed to cumulative) enrollments at each grade level. Results show an average merged area enrollment of 146 students at the 0-4 level, 268 at the 5-8 level and 189 at the advanced level. Portrayed graphically, grade level enrollments are as follows:

Graph I

Average Merged Area Enrollment by Grade Level
(January, 1974)



However, Graph I does not report the substantial variations among merged areas. Current enrollment in 0-4 was reported under 50 by seven coordinators, and six reported 200 or more. In 5-8 classes, enrollment was reported at 400 or more by five coordinators and under 200 by nine. At the 9-12 grade level, seven coordinators reported enrollments of under 100 while five reported 200 or more.

If there is an apparent discrepancy between grade level recruitment priorities and actual enrollments, the reason may be explained by the nature of the target population rather than by a failure to successfully fulfill priorities. 1973 DPI statistics show a total target population of 396,788 for the State of Iowa at the 0-8 grade level category aged 25 and older and a target population of 818,676 for 9-12 grade level category. The ratio is nearly two to one in favor of the advanced groups. DPI reports 5% of the 0-8 target population enrolled in the ABE program and 1% of the 9-12 population. Similarly, coordinators report an average of 16,000 persons in their target population with less than 8th grade achievement, and an average of 47,000 persons between 8th grade and 12th grade achievement, a ratio nearly three to one. If enrollment figures are examined in the light of these ratios, it would appear that the program has been successful in achieving grade level priorities.

However, there is dramatic variation in recruitment results among the merged areas reported in Table 1. The percentage of the target population enrolled ranged from .3% to 5% with six areas enrolling less than 1% and five enrolling over 2%. There was no apparent relationship between target population size and proportion enrolled.

The State Plan's first priority group to be served in the 1974 academic year was at the 0-4 grade level. In January-February coordinators

reported percentages enrolled in 0-4 ranging from 1% to 63%, with four areas reporting under 20% and three over 30%.

Cumulative total enrollments between 1973 and 1974 varied from a loss of 42% to a gain of 70%, four losing enrollments and six gaining over 40%. In 1974 82% of ABE enrollments were reported concentrated in three merged areas (see Table 1). On a statewide basis enrollments have been steadily increased: 1974 - 18,853; 1973 - 15,592; 1972 - 12,212; 1971 - 10,421; and 1970 - 8,476.

Another way to analyze recruitment priorities is in terms of student objectives. The Evaluation Committee established that priorities in the following order should pertain in recruitment: those primarily interested in improving their job situation, those primarily interested in improving English language proficiency, and those primarily interested in self-improvement.

However, only 13% of students report that their most important reason for returning to school was to improve their job situation, and only 7% returned in order to improve their knowledge of the English language. On the other hand, 24% gave as their most important reason for returning to school general self-improvement, and for the largest proportion, 49%, their most important reason for returning was to earn a high school diploma. The Coordinators reported that an average of 62% of their students have the high school diploma as their first priority. Implications for recruitment should be apparent.

Recruitment Strategies

Coordinators agreed with the Evaluation Committee on the recruitment strategies of greatest value. Most emphasis was given word of mouth and

agency referral. Door-to-door canvassing, co-sponsorship, and cooperation with public schools were given second priority in emphasis. Half or more of the coordinators reported giving great emphasis to each strategy. Use of the mass media was given comparable emphasis by a slightly smaller proportion of coordinators.

The Committee and all coordinators agreed that different recruitment methods were needed to reach different target groups. For the 0-4 grade level group the coordinators emphasized first door-to-door solicitation and secondly agency referral; the Committee felt that mass media and cooperation with schools should have greatest emphasis. For the 5-8 grade level group, coordinators most emphasized door-to-door solicitation and gave second emphasis to word-of-mouth and agency referral; the Committee expected that cooperation with the schools should be most emphasized. For the 9-12 grade group coordinators gave greatest emphasis to the mass media and second degree of emphasis to word-of-mouth; the Committee gave equal emphasis on door-to-door solicitation, agency referral, and co-sponsorship. Thus coordinators found cooperation with schools best for recruiting those in the 9-12 group but also useful for those in grades 5-8. The mass media was favored only for the 9-12 group.

Aside from the method itself, another important issue in recruitment strategies is who should do the recruiting. When asked how much emphasis should be placed on paid recruiters, the Evaluation Committee responded with a 5 on a five point scale, indicating greatest emphasis. Yet when coordinators were asked how much emphasis was actually placed on paid recruiters, an obvious discrepancy and great variations emerged. Four (24%) coordinators indicated a low degree of emphasis. Five (29%) indicated a medium degree of emphasis, and eight (46%) indicated a high

degree of emphasis.

Another discrepancy arises when we turn to the role of teachers in recruitment. The Evaluation Committee indicated that every ABE teacher should have recruitment responsibilities while the coordinator data indicates that an average of 69% of the teachers actually do have such responsibilities. In eight merged areas, however, 100% of the teachers do have recruitment responsibilities, according to coordinators. But teachers are reported to average only a little over an hour a week on recruitment; coordinators themselves average 8 hours a week.

Nine out of 12 directors reported that they shared decision making power with the coordinator in the area of recruitment, 11 reported responsibility for assessing the effectiveness of decisions in this area, and 9 said they were responsible for setting standards for recruitment. These were the areas of responsibility for recruitment which the Evaluation Committee decided were appropriate for directors. While over half the coordinators agreed that directors shared responsibility for assessment, only 39% attributed decision making power to the directors in the area of recruitment.

The Evaluation Committee indicated that 75% of those enrolled in the first week of classes should still be active by the sixth week. Coordinators reported that practice varied among areas from 59% to 95%, but nearly two-thirds of the coordinators reported that 75%-95% of their students were in fact still active by the sixth week.

Interpretative Summary

While the statewide totals do not indicate that recruitment is a severe problem in Iowa, there are marked differences in apparent effort

and results among the merged areas. Leaders interested in comparable performance should analyze Table 1 carefully. What combination of indicators of effort is most useful? Should targets be set for performance in terms of these indicators? Coordinators and DPI representatives should identify colleagues whose programs have been unusually effective in recruitment and systematically explore the practices which have proven most successful under different circumstances. There is much evidence that there is need for better ways of sharing experiences among coordinators. The variation in recruitment practice and results among the merged areas is the single most provocative finding in the area of recruitment.

The Evaluation Committee followed the State Plan in defining the general recruitment priority as "Anyone over the age of 16 who can benefit from and perceives the need for improved communication and conceptual skills." Narrowly interpreted, actual practice indicates that this priority is being achieved. The Committee also followed the State Plan in indicating that students in the 0-4 grade level were the program's first specific priority, students at the 5-8 level were the second priority, and students in the 9-12 level were the third priority. Although enrollment figures show the largest concentration of students at the 5-8 level and the second largest concentration at the 9-12 level, it must be noted that the total target population is heavily skewed in favor of the more advanced students. Given this fact, it seems fair to conclude that the state program has substantially met its recruitment priority. However, the great and unexplained variations among the merged areas should command the attention of those concerned with improving recruitment practice.

Several discrepancies appear when recruitment priorities are analyzed in regard to student objectives. The Evaluation Committee ranked students who desire to improve their job situation as their first recruitment priority, students who desire to improve their English language proficiency as second priority, and students who desire general self-improvement as the third priority. To earn a high school diploma is most frequently reported as a primary reason for enrolling by students (49%), followed by general self-improvement (24%), and improvement of job satisfaction (13%). Student interests should be reflected in recruitment efforts.

The Evaluation Committee's expectations regarding recruitment strategies have generally been met, although coordinators place less emphasis on paid recruiters and on teachers as recruiters than the Evaluation Committee anticipated. Again, the fact that some merged areas have been strikingly successful in recruitment suggests that coordinators and the DPI should look closely at the strategies of those who have produced the best recruitment results in both urban and rural settings and in regard to specific target groups of high priority. In-service education for coordinators and DPI representatives should be cast in the form of a cooperative investigation of the program's successes in the area of recruitment. Demonstration funds should be used to foster the utilization of those practices which have produced results. This approach to the study of these findings would be of far greater value than merely patterning strategies of recruitment after the most popular practice as reported in this section.

## STAFFING

Staffing includes the recruitment, selection, placement, supervision, reporting, assessment, and retention or termination of staff members in the ABE program. Although this section is primarily concerned with discrepancies within and among teachers, coordinators, directors, the Evaluation Committee, and others, it also includes information about the characteristics and professional activities of coordinators, directors, and DPI representatives. Detailed information on teacher characteristics and professional practice appears in Section III.

### Teachers

Teachers generally feel that their coordinators are doing a good job. An overwhelming majority reported that their coordinators were aware of classroom problems and supplied help when needed. 88% of the teachers agreed that the coordinator is effective in supplying necessary supporting services. Although, a great majority of teachers feel that they have considerable autonomy in the classroom, a third did not agree. When asked if they received enough feedback from the coordinator on how well they do their job, over half of the teachers strongly agreed, but nearly a quarter disagreed. However, all in all, an overwhelming majority of teachers (88%) reported that their morale was high.

When asked "Since September 1 (a period of about five months) how many times have you met with your ABE coordinator in an individual conference?", the most common response was 2 times although 18% responded that they had never met individually with the coordinator. When asked how many times they had met with the ABE coordinator as a group, 65% of the teachers responded "never".

Only 11% of the teachers indicated that an aide has been assigned to their classroom. Of these aides assigned, 44% were volunteers and 28% were paid.

When asked "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your present position as an ABE teacher?", 62% responded very satisfied, 37% responded moderately satisfied, and less than 1% responded dissatisfied.

If selecting teachers is a major function of the staffing process, it is important to examine the criteria used in selection. The Evaluation Committee was asked to specify how much emphasis should be placed on 11 criteria for selecting teachers. When the results of the questions are compared to the coordinator's assessment of how much emphasis is actually placed on these criteria, the following picture emerges:

Table 7

Criteria for Selecting Teachers:
Degrees of Emphasis in Intended and Current Practice

| Criteria | Eval.Comm. (5=Greatest Emphasis) | Coordinators (5=Greatest Emphasis) | Coordinators (% Responding Great Emphasis) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Personality | 5 | 4.9 | 100 |
| Experience teaching adults | 4 | 2.8 | 50 |
| Commitment to ABE | 4 | 4.8 | 100 |
| Experience in Counseling | 4 | 2.6 | 23 |
| Formal Training in Adult Education | 3 | 2.0 | 1 |
| Elementary Education Teaching Exp. | 3 | 2.7 | 28 |
| Minority Background | 2 | 1.7 | 0 |
| Age | 2 | 1.7 | 0 |
| Teaching Certificate | 2 | 2.5 | 28 |
| Sex | 1 | 1.4 | 0 |

Though personality and commitment to ABE rank high in both intended and current practice in Table 7, several important discrepancies are apparent. While experience in teaching adults ranked high as an Evaluation Committee criteria, only half of the coordinators rated this criteria as being of particular importance in actual teacher selection. Similarly, though the Evaluation Committee indicated that experience in counseling should be of considerable importance in selecting teachers, only 22% of the coordinators responded with High Importance as an actual staffing criteria. Although the Evaluation Committee considered possession of a teaching certificate to be of relatively low importance, 28% of the coordinators considered it of high priority in teacher selection.

Of greater significance to the operation and planning of ABE in Iowa is the wide variation found among coordinators in reporting practice. Beyond a consensus that age, sex, minority background, and formal training in adult education are of little or no importance in teacher selection, coordinators could only agree among themselves on the importance of the intangibles of personality and commitment. There was least agreement about the emphasis given elementary teaching experience, a teaching certificate, experience teaching adults, and counseling experience. Less than a third of the coordinators agreed on any degree of lesser or greater importance on a five point scale in regard to these criteria. In effect, leaders in Iowa's ABE program have not agreed upon any objective criteria for teacher selection.

Who should make decisions to hire and retain teachers? The Evaluation Committee was asked how much influence each of several staff roles should have on the initial decision to employ an ABE teacher. Coordinators

were then asked how much influence each staff role actually had. Table 8 presents the results:

Table 8

Degree of Influence on Hiring ABE Teachers:
Intended and Current Practice

| Staff Role | Eval.Comm. (Rank Order; 5=Greatest Influence) | Coordinators (% Reporting Great Emphasis) |
|---|---|---|
| ABE Coordinator | 5 | 100 |
| Co-Sponsor | 4 | 28 |
| Local ABE Teacher | 3 | 33 |
| Director | 3 | 40 |
| Local School District AE Coordinator | 2 | 28 |
| Local ABE students | 1 | 1 |

The major discrepancy which appears here is between the intended and actual role of the director. In actuality, the director appears to have a more active role in selecting teachers than the Evaluation Committee anticipated.

The Evaluation Committee was then asked how much influence the same persons should have on the decision to retain a teacher. A comparison with the results to the question with the coordinator assessment of actual practice follows:

Table 9

Degree of Influence on Retaining Teachers:
Intended and Current Practice

| Staff Role | Eval.Comm. (5=Greatest Influence) | Coordinators (% Reporting Great Influence) |
|---|---|---|
| ABE Coordinato | 5 | 100 |
| Co-Sponsor | 4 | 44 |
| Local ABE Teachers | 3 | 11 |
| Local ABE Students | 3 | 56 |
| Director of Adult Education | 3 | 33 |
| Local School District AE Coordinator | 3 | 17 |

It appears that in actual practice ABE students have a greater role in the decision to retain ABE teachers than the Evaluation Committee indicated they should. Directors also seem to have a greater than expected role in deciding to retain teachers.

Again, note must be taken of the relative absence of common practice among the merged areas in the matter of who has influence in the hiring and retention of teachers. Beyond the fact that the coordinator has the major responsibility, there was agreement among half or more of the coordinators only in regard to the limited influence of ABE students on the decision to employ teachers, on the limited influence of other ABE teachers on the decision to retain, and on the great influence of the director on retention. On a five point scale of influence, less than a third of the coordinators agreed upon the degree of greater or lesser influence of the other staff roles indicated in Tables 8 and 9.

How well should, and how well do teachers perform their jobs? This question was probed with both coordinators and the Evaluation Committee.

Table 10

Teacher and Aide Performance Ratings:
Intended and Current Practice
(in percent)

| | Teachers | | Aides | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rating | Eval.Comm. | Coord. | Eval.Comm. | Coord. |
| Excellent | 25 | 40 | 10 | 38 |
| Very Good | 30 | 31 | 50 | 41 |
| Good | 25 | 21 | 25 | 19 |
| Fair | 15 | 6 | 10 | 2 |
| Poor | 5 | 1 | 5 | 0 |

Clearly the coordinators' assessment of actual teacher performance considerably exceeds Evaluation Committee's expectations. This is also true for aides.

The Evaluation Committee anticipated that 75% of Iowa ABE teachers would be Very Satisfied with their jobs, 20% would be Moderately Satisfied, and 5% would be Dissatisfied with their jobs.

When asked to estimate levels of teacher satisfaction the average coordinator responses were: Very Satisfied 74%, Moderately Satisfied 21%, Dissatisfied 3%. There was wide variation among merged areas in the proportion of teachers which coordinators rated Very Satisfied: 5 coordinators reported over 70% and 7 reported 25% or less of their teachers as Very Satisfied.

Teachers were then asked: "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your present position as an ABE teacher?" Responses were: 62% Very Satisfied, 37% Moderately Satisfied, and 1% Dissatisfied. Though the coordinators' assessment approximates the Committee's expectations,

fewer teachers were Very Satisfied than either the Committee expected or the coordinators estimated. It appears that general teacher job satisfaction is quite high in Iowa, there being an almost negligible 1% who are dissatisfied.

High job satisfaction level seems to be reflected in the teacher turnover rate. The Evaluation Committee expected that the annual teacher turnover rate would be 20%, while coordinators report an annual turnover rate of only 12% in current practice (13 coordinators reported 0-15%, 4 reported 20-50%). Teachers, however, reported that 34% of their members have one year or less ABE teaching experience. If approximately 1/3 of the teachers are new, the coordinators' 12% turnover figure is suspect. The common variation of 50-300% between enrollments reported in January, 1974, and cumulative enrollments for 1974 cast further doubt on the coordinators' conservative report (see Table I). Thus whether an important discrepancy has been identified depends largely upon the figure the reader accepts.

Although the Evaluation Committee indicated that aides and volunteers <u>should</u> be of great importance to the ABE program, only 11% of the teachers indicate that an aide or volunteer has been assigned and only 24% of the coordinators indicate that aides and volunteers are important to their programs. Again, there was little agreement among coordinators reporting on a 5 point scale of importance. Four indicated 1 (unimportant), five reported 2, one reported 4, and three reported 5. The Evaluation Committee reported that an effort to recruit teachers from outside the school system <u>should</u> be made, and all coordinators reported that such efforts are made.

The Evaluation Committee indicated that teachers, coordinators, and co-sponsors should follow-up student dropouts. Coordinators reported that teachers and coordinators follow up dropouts in all programs while co-sponsors follow up dropouts according to 10 coordinators, and recruiters are used for this purpose by 12 coordinators.

Coordinators

Coordinators report that on the average they work 43 hours per week for the community college or vocational-technical school and devote an average of 38 hours to ABE. Nine coordinators devote 35 hours or more to ABE (i.e., full-time), six devote 20-30 hours, and only one less than 20 hours. Coordinators report that an average of 64% of their salary is paid by federal ABE funds. Seven coordinators report 90-100%, six 50%, and two report none. Though coordinators indicate that an average of $57,717 was budgeted for ABE in their merged areas, exclusive of released unimpounded funds, budgetary figures are suspect because of apparent differences in accounting procedures. Of 17 coordinators reporting, 7 had ABE budgets in the $74,000-$110,000 range, 5 in the $35,000-$60,000 range, and 5 in the $5,000-$28,000 range. Coordinators also report an average of 54% of their funds coming from federal sources and 42% coming from state and local resources. On the average, 54% of the ABE budget is allocated to teacher salaries, 14% to the coordinator's salary, 11% to instructional materials, and 14% to indirect costs.

Coordinators report an average of 25 teachers, eight report less than 20 teachers, five between 20 and 30, and five over 30 teachers. Fifteen coordinators report directly to a Director of Adult Education while three report to an intermediate supervisor.

Coordinators reported that in the period of September to January they met with their teachers an average of 3 times on a group basis. No coordinator failed to meet groups of teachers since September 1. Yet, 60% of the teachers indicated that they never met with their coordinator as a group.

Coordinators reported that they met an average of 23 times with their teachers in individual conferences. Teachers report they have met individually with their coordinators an average of 2 times.

Coordinators report an average of 27% of their classes located within a 10 mile radius of their offices. This is an important indicator of outreach for most programs and reflects degree of effort in program development in many cases. Only four coordinators reported 50% of their classes within the 10 mile radius, two reported 25-49%, nine reported 10-24% and three under 10%. Coordinators most commonly visited classes outside the 10 mile radius once since September 1, 1974 (about 5 months), although there was great variation in practice. Eight coordinators visited 0-3 times, three visited 3-5 times, two visited 7-9 times, and three reported visiting 15-50 times. Coordinators reported that they visited classes both within and outside a ten mile radius an average of 8 times.

A 1974 Center for Adult Education national research report found that the professionalization of the ABE coordinator was the most important factor in determining the innovativeness of an ABE program. In that study professionalism was measured by the amount of time the coordinator devotes to ABE, preparation in adult education, activity in professional associations

and centrality of adult education to career plans. Though six coordinators indicated they have no formal training in adult education, 7 had completed one or more college courses in adult education, and four were working towards a graduate degree in adult education. Thus 68% of the Iowa coordinators are advancing their education in the field. 82% of the coordinators report that they are moderately or very active in professional associations. 94% belong to the Iowa Association for Life Long Learning, 41% to NAPCAE, and 12% to AEA. 83% of the coordinators report that adult education is very central to their career plans. Taken together, these figures indicate a varied but relatively high degree of professionalism among Iowa ABE coordinators: seven scored high, six scored medium, and 5 scored low on the Professionalism Index. Of the 5 merged area programs judged by 2 or more DPI representatives as most innovative, 4 had coordinators who scored High on the Index.*

All coordinators reported that DPI has been quite supportive of their programs and that since September 1, 1974. A DPI official has visited ABE programs an average of 3 times. DPI functions which coordinators value

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*The Professionalism Index is computed by adding weights assigned responses to items 2, 15, 16, and 18 as follows:

| (2) Response | Weight | (15) Response | Weight | (16) Response | Weight | (18) Response | Weight |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 35+ hours | = 3 | 1 | = 4 | 1 | = 3 | 5 | = 4 |
| 26-35 hours | = 2 | 2 | = 3 | 2 | = 2 | 4 | = 3 |
| 16-25 hours | = 1 | 3 | = 1 | 3 | = 1 | 3 | = 2 |
| | | 4 | = 0 | 4 | = 0 | 2 | = 1 |
| | | | | | | 1 | = 0 |

Weights are added for each coordinator. The following classification was used:

| Total Weighted Score | Designation | No. of Coordinators |
|---|---|---|
| 12-14 | High | 7 |
| 10-11 | Medium | 6 |
| 6-9 | Low | 5 |

most include: Interpreting and Supporting Your Work, Assisting in Staff Development and Providing Information on Current Developments in Other Merged Areas. Half the coordinators valued Program Development Assistance, although opinion varied greatly among coordinators, while only 3 coordinators placed special value on Monitoring and Establishing DPI Guidelines, 7 coordinators placed low value on this function.

71% of the coordinators reported that the Adult Education director is highly aware of their program needs, and a similar proportion felt that the director was highly supportive of the ABE program. Although eight coordinators felt that their community college or vocational-technical school is highly supportive of ABE, five report that this school is luke warm in its support and four coordinators report a low degree of institutional support. When asked what things concerned them most in their day-to-day operation of the program, 7 coordinators mentioned recruitment-related problems, five time coverage problems and one coordinator mentioned relationships with the community college.

DPI Representatives

Though some of the data on DPI representatives is covered in the preceding analysis, the administration of a DPI questionnaire provides us the opportunity to explore the DPI role in more detail. The DPI questionnaire was administered to the only 4 persons directly involved with ABE, including the director and supervisor of the adult education unit and two regional consultants.

In terms of the time DPI representaves devote to ABE, the four respondents reported that they spent 20%, 45%, 40% and 60% respectively on field work; and 70%, 10%, 40%, and 40% respectively on non-ABE work.

Thus, 40% of the DPI's working time was not spent on ABE, leaving the equivalent of 2.4 persons exclusively concerned with the program.

DPI respondents reported a total of 38 visits to coordinators in the merged areas since September 1, 1974 (about 8 months), to discuss educational matters with an average of 10 trips per respondent. DPI representatives reported a total of 34 similar visits to different merged areas to see ABE directors, an average of 9 trips each. On the average, each respondent reported visiting 4 coordinators more than once.

Since September, 1974, DPI staff attended a total of 20 meetings with all or most ABE coordinators and 24 meetings with Adult Education directors.

DPI officials feel that the services they render on visits are: providing information on current program development assistance, developments in other merged areas, program development assistance, interpreting and supporting the work of the coordinator, and assisting in staff development -- in that order of value. Monitoring established DPI guidelines is seen to have little value. As noted in the previous section, coordinators generally concur with this assessment.

On the average, DPI representatives estimate the annual rate of teacher turnover in Iowa to be 24%. However, there was wide variation in estimates among the 4 respondents: 40%, 25%, 15%, 10%. As previously noted, the Evaluation Committee estimated 20%, and coordinators assessed the actual rate to be 12%. This is a considerable difference in perception.

Although three of the four DPI officials consider aides and volunteers to be very important to ABE in Iowa, coordinators could not agree

on this question, and only 11% of the teachers have been assigned an aide or volunteer -- again a discrepancy.

In terms of the questions relating to professionalism, 1 DPI respondent had completed a graduate degree in adult education, one had completed one or more college courses in adult education, and one had had no formal training in adult education. Two DPI officials indicated that they are very active in adult education professional associations, while one indicates moderate activity. 3 belong to IALL, 2 belong to NAPCAE, one belongs to AEA, and 3 belong to MVAEA. Three DPI representatives responding to this question indicated that adult education is very central to their career plans.

When asked to identify the major problems of ABE in the merged areas, DPI officials responded as follows:

- Lack of identity of ABE
- Low priority on ABE classes
- Recruitment
- Lack of Area School Commitment
- Poor ABE promotion
- Counseling availability
- Selection and use of instructional materials
- State funding
- Staff see themselves as delivering adult education information not as adult educators
- Staff training
- Dissemination of adult education practice
- Higher priority placed on adult education among ABE staff

Adult Education Directors

In the great majority of merged areas, the ABE coordinator reports to a Director of Adult Education, who typically has responsibility for all the area school's adult education activities. Over 90% of the directors report that they are highly involved with the ABE program in the selection of the ABE coordinator and in the supervision of ABE fiscal management. A more complete picture of director involvement is presented in Table 11.

Table 11

Adult Education Directors' Involvement in the ABE Program
(in percent)

| Area of Involvement | Little or No Involvement | Medium Involvement | High Involvement |
|---|---|---|---|
| Selection of ABE Coordinators | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| Supervision of ABE Fiscal Management | 0 | 6 | 94 |
| ABE Staff Development | 18 | 47 | 35 |
| Liaison between ABE Program and Community Groups | 12 | 59 | 27 |
| Selection of ABE Teachers | 41 | 35 | 23 |
| ABE Curriculum Development and Instruction | 35 | 41 | 24 |
| Student Recruitment for ABE Classes | 53 | 29 | 18 |
| Work with ABE Area Advisory Committee | 75 | 13 | 13 |

Aside from coordinator selection and fiscal supervision, most adult education directors do not get heavily involved with the ABE program. When asked if there were any areas where they should have greater involvement,

only three directors answered affirmatively, expressing a desire to be more involved with an ABE area advisory committee.

The amount of communication between coordinators and directors seems to vary considerably between merged areas. Several directors report daily conferences while others report conferences on a weekly or frequent basis. Nine directors require no regular written reports from the coordinators. Although on the average directors devote 18% of their time to ABE, practice varies greatly. Eight directors report that they spend 5-10% of their time on ABE, five spent 15-25%, and three spend 30-60% on ABE.

Directors indicate that they have been visited an average of 2.8 times by a DPI official since September 1, 1974. 29% of the directors would prefer more frequent visits, and 71% would not. of those services rendered by DPI, 82% of the directors highly value the provision of information on current developments in other merged areas, and 76% highly value DPI's assistance in staff development. 59% highly value the interpretation and the support of the ABE coordinators' work, and 53% value help in program assistance. Least valued was the function of monitoring of established DPI guidelines. All but one director reports the DPI has been very supportive of ABE.

Though logically only 2 programs could be among the top 10% of merged area ABE programs, seven (41%) of the directors reported their belief that their programs fall in the top 10% in excellence. Five directors considered their ABE program to be better than most, four considered their programs to be about average, and one director considered his ABE program to be below average. Seven directors reported that their ABE programs

have a high degree of public awareness, seven indicate medium awareness and three reported that public awareness is low.

Adult education directors have responsibility for all the adult education programming which takes place through their area school. In terms of budget, directors reported an average of 23% of their adult education budget allocated to ABE, 17% goes to general adult continuing education, 30% is allocated to career supplementary education, and 30% of the adult education budget is allocated to "other" adult education programs. However, the proportion of the total adult education budget devoted to ABE varies substantially among merged areas: eight directors report 5-15%, three report 16-30%, four report 31-39%, and two report 40-50%.

Of all staff roles covered in this section, adult education directors appear to be the most professionalized. Four have completed a graduate degree in adult education, or are working towards a degree, ten have completed one or more college courses in adult education and only three have no formal training in adult education. Ten directors characterize themselves as highly active in adult education professional associations, and seven report moderate activity. Fourteen belong to IALL, fourteen belong to NAPCAE, five have membership in AEA, and twelve are members of MVAEA. 94% of the directors consider adult education to be central to their career plans.

Interpretative Summary

A third of the ABE teachers do not feel they have considerable autonomy in their classrooms. This is potentially a source of trouble with which staff conferences might productively deal. A majority of

teachers report never having met as a group with the coordinator. Why? The modal pattern of individual teacher-coordinator conferences is limited to two meetings. Coordinators should together rationalize the functions and desired frequencies of teacher conferences. When do teachers need help most and with what kinds of problems?

There is great discrepancy within and among all groups about the desirability of the use of aides in the program. Staff development planning should deal directly with this question and policy formulated accordingly.

Coordinators and others in the program should attempt to formulate and test the validity of specific objective criteria in teacher selection, especially the values of experience in teaching adults, counseling, and elementary school teaching. The variation in practice among coordinators suggests the need to systematically exchange experience on this issue. The fact that formal training in adult education is so little valued requires study by leaders of ABE in Iowa so that programs offering such training may be modified to make their effort more relevant to real needs in the state. DPI and others should meet to discuss these findings with those involved in adult education programs in institutions of higher education. Perhaps demonstration project funds could be used to gear universities to the needs of staff development in ABE.

Organized discussion is needed about the role of directors in hiring teachers inasmuch as two-fifths are involved in this function. What mode of coordinator-director relationship works best? What should the director's role be in this regard? There is need for coordinators and others in the program to rationalize the roles of the director, the local school

district coordinator, teachers, and others in the process of teacher selection and retention.

Coordinators should study the practices of their colleagues who have achieved the highest degree of expressed teacher satisfaction and lowest teacher turnover rates. What patterns of interactions are encouraged? How are teachers made to feel that they have a highly satisfying role to play in the program? Both coordinators and directors appear to have an unrealistically optimistic conception of the progress of their ABE programs. There is urgent need for DPI to provide a standard formula for reporting rates of teacher turnover. The value of using recruiters for follow-up of dropouts should also be cooperatively studied by coordinators.

DPI and other leaders of ABE in Iowa should study the variations in proportion of coordinator time devoted to ABE and the relationship of this to proportion of federal ABE funds allocated. There is considerable evidence nationally of the value of a full-time commitment by local program administrators to ABE. DPI should find appropriate incentives to encourage the full-time appointment of professionally qualified coordinators within the merged areas. There is statistically significant evidence both nationally and in Iowa supporting the selection of coordinators and directors who have a commitment to the profession of adult education, work at it as a full-time effort, have been trained in adult education, and are active in professional associations in the field.

The value of emphasizing the organization of classes throughout the merged area requires policy consideration. To what degree and under what circumstances does the proportion of classes located outside a radius of 10, 25, 50, or 100 miles represent a desirable criteria of judging

program effort? What standards should pertain for judging this effort and other indicators suggested in Table 1?

What about the widely varying practice of coordinator classroom visitations? What patterns of practice work best under what circumstances? What minimum effort appears defensible?

Nearly a third of the coordinators report lack of support for their program by their community college or vocational-technical school. This should be studied by coordinators, directors, and the DPI and a strategy for fostering support formulated and carried out is a collaborate effort.

DPI and the coordinators need to study whether the very limited allocation of DPI staff to ABE is handicapping the program. Practice in other states should be studied. What roles, for example, in program development, materials development, innovation dissemination, evaluating specific practices and products, public information, needs assessment, fostering information systems, developing a strategy for demonstration and experimentation, operating a clearinghouse, setting standards for professional development, should DPI play? These questions should be dealt with in DPI staff development sessions. The dramatic differences in perception of practice and perspectives among DPI representatives clearly requires careful review and organized effort at achieving consensus. There is also need for a simplified uniform accounting system and a reporting system which regularly updates the information on Table 1 and other data suggested in this report.

The role of the DPI and the directors in staff development needs to be clarified. What appropriate functions should each perform? What are the appropriate roles of the director in teacher selection, retention,

curriculum development, and instruction? Is this most usefully a review function? Under what circumstances should directors become involved in operational matters? Should they be responsible for program evaluation and, if so, what criteria and methodology should pertain? What is the impact of the director who devotes the largest proportion of his time to ABE? What does he do with his time -- does he assume additional roles, involve himself more in operational decisions, or simply spend more time on the same functions as those with less time to spend? What models can be developed to guide directors interested in doing a better job in ABE? Coordinators and directors need to study these questions. One way to begin this process is to review discrepancies in perception and practice reported in this report between these groups and within each to seek consensus whenever possible.

## IN-SERVICE EDUCATION

This section focuses upon in-service education for staff development within the ABE program. Key questions are: which staff are to receive in-service education in what form, for what duration, with what content, who is to play what roles in planning and conducting the program, and how much time and money does it cost? Since most teachers have only about a year's experience in the program and have had no previous professional preparation in adult education, there is general consensus that in-service education is essential.

### Form

The Evaluation Committee ranked the degree of emphasis which should be placed upon five forms of in-service education as follows:

Table 12

Desirable Emphasis on Forms of In-Service Education

| Activity | Order of Emphasis |
|---|---|
| a. Novice-master assignment | 1 |
| b. Coaching by coordinator or others | 3 |
| c. Workshops and conferences conducted by the local ABE program | 2 |
| d. Other workshops and conferences conducted by others (state or regional agencies or institutions) | 4 |
| e. Visitation in other ABE classes | 5 |

In reporting current practice, coordinators indicated about equal emphasis was placed upon coaching and workshops conducted by the local program. Nearly half the coordinators reported that novice-master

assignments were given lowest order of emphasis, although there were significant differences among them in rating this activity. There was least agreement among coordinators pertaining to the degree of emphasis given to coaching and class visitation; apparently practice varies greatly in different merged areas.

Teachers reported that most emphasis was given workshops conducted by local programs; workshops conducted by others was given second emphasis in practice. Nearly half the teachers reported that visitation to other ABE classrooms was given least emphasis, and there was little agreement among them about how much emphasis this practice should receive. Participation in novice-master assignments and university courses were reported as given little emphasis. There was least agreement among teachers about how much emphasis was in fact placed upon coaching and about how much emphasis should be given this form of in-service education.

DPI respondents reported very different orders of emphasis given these practices. Two of the four respondents agreed that workshops conducted by local programs were most emphasized, classroom visitation was third in emphasis, and workshops conducted by others was fourth.

Extent of Participation

The Evaluation Committee indicated that, on the average, the following minimum numbers of days should be devoted to workshop participation by various staff members; average current practice is also given as reported by coordinators:

Table 13

Days Devoted to In-Service Workshops

| Staff Category | First Year EC | First Year Coord. | Subsequent Years EC | Subsequent Years Coord. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Teachers and Counselors | 5 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| b. Aides | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| c. Coordinators | 5 | 8 | 3 | 7 |
| d. Directors | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 |

It is apparent in Table 13 that actual practice exceeds the Committee's expectations except in the case of first year teachers and counselors. However, coordinators reported great variation among the merged areas in the number of days devoted to teacher involvement in workshops. This varied from 1/2 to 6 days; only six coordinators reported that the standards set by the Evaluation Committee had been met or exceeded. The coordinators themselves reported spending from 1/2 to 14 days in in-service workshops. There was similarly great variation among the merged areas in the number of days of aide involvement in workshops: from 1/2 to 8 days. In seven areas the coordinators reported 0-2 days of workshop involvement by directors, but two reported 10 days.

There was also wide variation among areas in the number of days which teachers reported they spend in in-service training. Most reported 1 day or, less commonly, 2 days. This is a marked departure from the reports by coordinators of average practice in Table 13.

The Evaluation Committee felt that 100% of teachers, counselors, coordinators, and directors should be involved in an in-service workshop, course, or conference during the year. The Committee also indicated that 90% of aides should be so involved. In current practice the coordinators

report that, on the average in the state, 98% of their teachers did participate last year. Half the coordinators reported that all aides were also involved, half reported only 50% participation. However, about 20% of the teachers reported that they had not yet received any in-service training as of January, 1975. These are presumedly teachers new to the program although the proportion seems large.

Content

To determine emphasis given to areas of content in the past three years and to assess needs for in-service education, teachers, coordinators, DPI representatives, and the Evaluation Committee were asked to rate sixteen topics common to in-service programs. The results are presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Emphasis Given Topics of In-Service Education and Current Priorities Assigned by Teachers, Coordinators, DPI, and the Evaluation Committee (Teacher Responses in Percentage)

| TOPIC | PAST EMPHASIS | | | | CURRENT PRIORITY | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Tc | Co | DPI | EC | Tc | Co | DPI | EC |
| a. ABE program orientation: objectives, procedures, current developments, plans, reports | Hi69* | Hi | | Hi | Hi53 | | | |
| b. Differences in teaching adults and children | | Hi | | | | | Hi | |
| c. Philosophy of adult ed. | Hi66 | | | Lo | Hi56 | | Hi | |
| d. Understanding the student population, culture of poverty, ethnic group differences | | | | Lo | | | Hi | |
| e. Course organization: content selection, scheduling and sequencing topics making lesson plans | Lo41 | | Lo* | Lo | | | | |

| TOPIC | PAST EMPHASIS Tc | Co | DPI | EC | CURRENT PRIORITY Tc | Co | DPI | EC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| f. Methods of instruction: selecting, adapting, and using | Hi48 | Hi | | | Hi72 | Hi | Hi | |
| g. Instructional materials and aides: selecting, adapting, and using | Hi52 | Hi | Lo | | Hi74 | Hi | | |
| h. Diagnosis of student needs, testing and evaluating achievement; student program prescription | | Hi | | | Hi64 | | Hi | |
| i. Class control, management of student failure, coping with lack of self-confidence | Lo44 | | | | | | Hi | |
| j. Counseling students in academic or personal matters | Lo44 | Hi | | | Hi50 | Hi | | Hi* |
| k. Working with aides and volunteers | Lo72 | Lo | Lo | | | | | |
| l. Student recruitment and retention | | Hi* | | Hi | | Hi* | | Hi |
| m. Individualizing instruction | | Hi | | | Hi67* | Hi | | Hi |
| n. Improving human relations: teacher-student | | Hi* | | | Hi54 | Hi | | |
| o. Improving staff relationships within ABE | Lo52 | | | | | | | |
| p. Teaching "coping" skills | | | | | | Hi | | |

*Highest rated item(s); underlined items those given highest possible rating by largest percentage of teachers.

Table 14 reports at least a majority of coordinator responses and at least two of four DPI responses.

Teachers and coordinators agree on the high current priority set on five topics: materials, methods, individualized instruction, human

relations, and counseling -- in that order. DPI respondents concurred on the priority need for methods and individualized instruction. The Evaluation Committee agreed on counseling and individualized instruction. The largest number of teachers gave their highest priority rating to individualized instruction, the largest number of coordinators gave theirs to human relations, and the Evaluation Committee theirs to counseling.

Student recruitment and retention was very strongly recommended as a priority by coordinators and the Evaluation Committee. Teachers feel the need for diagnosis of student needs and coordinators for coping skill emphasis. Most items rated of high current priority were reported to have received a high degree of past emphasis in in-service programs.

Roles

There was consensus in the Evaluation Committee that the coordinator should have the main role in all phases of planning and conducting local in-service education and sole responsibility for organizing and conducting these activities. Directors, teachers and counselors were also seen as appropriately involved in main roles in setting objectives. These four groups were seen as playing main roles, along with the DPI, for diagnosing needs, evaluating in-service programs and following up on learning gains.

In current practice, coordinators reported that directors played a major role only in appraising needs and setting objectives. Nearly two-thirds of the directors saw Making Decisions on in-service education as their responsibility, although they perceived their major role in evaluation of results. Directors indicated that assistance on staff development

was one of more valuable services rendered by DPI. Teachers played a major role in these two functions but were even more involved in conducting and evaluating the program and in following up. Considerably less than half the coordinators reported any other staff members as playing major roles in in-service education.

The Evaluation Committee felt that coordinators should be devoting 15% of their time to in-service education; coordinators reported devoting from 2% to 25% of their time -- eight spent 5% or less of their time on in-service programs, and only three spent 15% or more.

The DPI reports one staff person spends 75% of his time on in-service work, one 10%, and two 2% each.

Incentives and Impact

The Evaluation Committee expected that the incentives which should be most important to encourage participation in in-service education included that it be conducted locally, expenses are paid, and provision is made for extra pay -- in that order. This was confirmed in current practice by coordinators. The Committee indicated that self-selection should be the method of selecting staff for in-service participation; coordinators reported that this was the practice in the merged areas.

Coordinators reported little agreement in assessing the impact of past in-service programs on increasing staff morale, on enhancing staff effectiveness in recruiting and orienting new students, and on individualizing instruction. Over half the coordinators felt that there had been a poor job done in improving the selection, organization, and evaluation of content. They tended to agree that in-service programs had contributed to improving human relations and sensitivities.

It is interesting that coordinators felt that in-service education had been least effective in improving course organization when this topic is reported to have been given little emphasis in past in-service efforts by teachers, the DPI, and the Evaluation Committee, on Table 14, and none of the respondent groups assigned this topic a high current priority.

Interpretative Summary

There is urgent need for systematic planning and standard setting in the area of in-service education. Staff development tends to be equated with a day or two of workshop attendance. A comprehensive strategy should conceptualize in-service education as a priority and a continuous process within which there is an appropriate place for several or all of the following components: workshops, coaching, novice-master assignments, classroom visitation, planned involvement in cooperative curriculum and materials development and program evaluation, and university courses in adult education.

The ambiguity and discrepancies in perspective within the program pertaining to the use of coaching, novice-master assignments, and classroom visitation may be overcome to some degree by defining these concepts in operational terms. What have been the most successful experiences in utilizing these approaches in various combinations within Iowa? Some of these practices are essential simply as support activities for effective needs assessment for workshop planning and follow-up.

Workshops should evolve out of a continuous process of in-service involvement when common needs have been identified or a common task requires collaborative effort. They should not constitute an interruption or an activity separate from program development but represent a

specialized form of intensive cooperative program development effort within an on-going process. This is not feasible unless there are other continuing, planned, in-service activities progressing sequentially through which needs may be identified for individuals and groups; practical day-to-day classroom activity may serve as content for cooperative study and experimentation; improved program practices and processes may be identified, assessed, and adapted; descrepancies in expectations are identified and resolved among people working together; and program effort, including in-service effort, may be evaluated and followed up by those who have a stake in the success of the program. The major segments of this evaluation study -- goals, recruitment, staffing, instruction, in-service education, and collaboration -- are all areas in which major issues have been identified, most of which are amenable to planned staff development effort. It would be disappointing if the findings of this report were not fully utilized as a set of issues around which in-service programs are planned and conducted in each merged area and on a state-wide level as well.

A comprehensive strategy of in-service education would incorporate a system of (1) needs assessment, (2) setting priorities for staff coverage and time allocated to participation, (3) scheduling, (4) projecting costs and planning budget allocations, (5) setting operational objectives, (6) determining the appropriate forms of in-service education, (7) selection and sequencing content areas, (8) evaluation, (9) follow-up, (10) assignment of specific responsibilities for these functions among coordinators, directors, teachers, the DPI, and others involved, (11) a uniform reporting system for in-service education which includes all of

the foregoing, and (12) a program of experiment and demonstration geared to specific objectives and problems identified in developing and implementing the strategy.

Standard setting need not imply enforced conformity but should be seen as the development of consensus among those charged with leadership for establishing norms and parameters, a rationale, a set of criteria for self-assessment, a system of effective communication and reporting, and equity in treatment for staff and students among the merged areas. For example, what is the desirable range within which funds should be projected and allocated for in-service education in terms of time and cost per participant in the initial and subsequent years of service? What patterns of in-service education activities have been found in Iowa more or less appropriate for staff members with different qualifications and learning needs? Why not cooperatively develop a common methodology for needs assessment, program evaluation, and reporting?

In view of the lack of common perception of the emphasis and use to be given alternative forms of staff development and the critical issues involved, the DPI and the coordinators should collaborate in mapping and implementing a series of experimental and demonstration projects dealing with in-service education to establish the conditions of effective practice as a basis for standard setting. The issues have been identified, variations in current practice and perceptions documented, and a useful methodology for further study demonstrated by this evaluation report. Where action cannot be taken through in-service education to resolve the reported discrepancies, experimental and demonstration projects should be used to refine the options and test alternative solutions.

It is encumbent upon leaders in the program to rationalize the extraordinary discrepancies in both practice and perspective which have been documented among the merged areas and within them as well. Fairness to teachers and their students demands that some equity in in-service education effort pertain among areas which relates amounts of money spent to the numbers and qualifications of staff to be trained and to the availability of existing specialized resources required.

The amount of teacher and aide time devoted to in-service education seems entirely inadequate, especially if one accepts the reports of teachers about the extent of their in-service participation (most reporting one day), and about the extent of meetings with other ABE teachers (65% had not met with a group in the last six months), and about the extent of meetings with the coordinator (most met twice in the last six months). Most teachers have had limited professional training to prepare them for adult education and have only about a year of experience in the program. There is serious lack of information among those in the program about what is going on and lack of agreement within merged areas and among them about all phases of in-service education.

In addition to anomalies in amounts of time, money, and participation in in-service education, it is essential that the question be clarified as to who is to do what, specifically, in assessing needs, setting objectives, evaluating, and following-up. The roles of the DPI and the directors are unclear to many leaders in the program and opinions differ.

The questionnaire items developed for this evaluation (e.g., see Table 14) may be adapted for periodic assessment of teacher in-service needs by both DPI and the coordinators. The DPI could adapt and coordinate the administration of these instruments by the coordinators

and compile statewide reports of expressed preferences of teachers and others as the basis for setting state and merged area in-service priorities. This, of course, would represent only one of several complementary approaches to needs assessment (e.g., coaching, novice-master assignments, classroom visitation, cooperative participation in curriculum and materials development, etc.).

Priority content needs have been reported for in-service education in the next few years. These include instructional materials, methods, human relations, counseling, diagnosis of student needs, student recruitment and retention, and coping skills. The planning process for incorporating these areas of priority concern in whatever in-service efforts will be forthcoming should begin as soon as possible.

## COLLABORATION

The purpose of the collaboration section is to examine the ABE program's relationships with other organizations and agencies within the community, especially relationships with those which act as co-sponsors of classes, i.e., provide space or other significant resources or provide at least 50% of the students enrolled. Collaboration is also of potential importance to ABE for student referral, placement, and as a source of community support.

When the Evaluation Committee was asked how much priority local ABE programs should place on the development of collaborative relationships, the response was Highest Priority (a 5 on a 5 point scale). However, when coordinators were asked how much priority was actually placed on collaboration only a third responded with Highest Priority, and slightly less than a third responded with Medium Priority.

ABE programs typically target their collaborative efforts on particular kinds of agencies. The Evaluation Committee was asked "What kinds of agencies and organizations should local ABE programs work with as co-sponsors and sources of referral support?" The coordinators were then asked to indicate how much importance was actually placed on collaboration with each agency listed. The results are as follows:

Table 15

Importance of Organizations and Agencies for Collaboration
(Intended and Current Practice)

| Type of Agency | Evaluation Committee Ratings | Coordinator Ratings (in percentage) |
|---|---|---|
| Social Service | High | 56 |
| Schools | High | 28 |
| CAP | High | 47 |
| Employment | High | 44 |
| Institutions (hospitals, county homes) | High | 50 |
| Business and Industry | Medium | 50 |
| Public Health | Low | 56 |
| Churches | Low | 75 |
| University Extension | Low | 83 |

Although on the average, coordinators tended to rate the importance of all agencies significantly lower than the Evaluation Committee, the greatest discrepancy seems to be with Schools. The Committee felt collaboration with schools should be of High Importance; only 28% of the coordinators indicate that it is in actual practice. There was the greatest disagreement among coordinators pertaining to the importance of schools for collaboration, over a quarter of the coordinators rated schools High.

It is useful to compare the benefits gained from the disadvantages to collaboration. In order to tap this dimension the Evaluation Committee was asked to indicate the importance of several benefits associated with collaboration. The coordinators were then asked to

indicate the importance of several benefits associated with collaboration. The coordinators were then asked to indicate the actual importance of the benefits to their program.

Both the Committee and the coordinators agreed that the benefits of collaboration were of the following order of importance:

1. Recruitment of students through co-sponsored classes
2. Extension of ABE to hard-to-reach segments of the target population through co-sponsored classes
3. Increased public awareness of program through co-sponsorship collaboration with referral agencies
4. Increased community support for ABE through collaboration with other agencies

There was greatest disagreement over the importance of the benefit

> Provision of support services by collaborating organizations (e.g., child care, counseling, transportation).

The Committee rated this benefit very important, but there was the widest spread of ratings among coordinators with nearly a quarter of them assigning each of the following ratings on a five point scale: 2, 3, 4, and 5 (5 = Very Important). While the Committee expected that co-sponsorship should be of moderate importance as a source of obtaining funds, coordinators reported that in practice this benefit was of minimal importance.

The disadvantages to collaboration were probed in a manner similar to the benefits. The Evaluation Committee assigned a rank order to six common disadvantages in terms of how it anticipated these disadvantages would pertain to the statewide program. Coordinators reported on the extent they encountered these disadvantages in actual practice.

Coordinators overwhelmingly agreed that there was little or no interference in the operation of their ABE program or decrease in administrative autonomy as a result of collaboration. The Committee expressed its greatest concern about the extent to which there would be interference in the program operation as a result of collaboration. No serious concern was expressed by coordinators about increase in unit costs as a result of collaboration or that students served through co-sponsored programs were not representative of the target population the program is trying to reach. The disadvantage of greatest concern was loss of program flexibility. Over a fifth of the coordinators reported that their program had experienced this disadvantage to a great extent.

The Evaluation Committee indicated that 65% of ABE classes in Iowa should be co-sponsored, while coordinators report an average of only 32% co-sponsored. There was again great variation in practice among merged areas with 2% to 95% of classes co-sponsored. Ten coordinators reported 25%, four reported 26-50%, and three reported 70% or more of their classes co-sponsored.

Eleven coordinators out of 18 indicated that they employed staff members "whose responsibility is to act as liaison between the ABE program and the community." Coordinators reported the following order of importance of the functions of liaison personnel: recruiting students, following up on dropouts, and providing feedback on the success of the ABE program in the community

Only one coordinator indicated that he had experienced a major conflict in working with collaborating agencies, and only one reported

serious difficulty in establishing contact with potential collaborating agencies.

The most frequently expressed reason given by coordinators for their termination of co-sponsored classes was low enrollment. Fulfillment of the educational needs of the co-sponsor was the next most frequently mentioned reason for termination. Co-sponsor demands which are too costly to meet were cited as an occasional reason for termination.

In order to collect data on collaboration from the agencies involved with ABE, a questionnaire was administered to co-sponsors in each merged area. Of 56 respondents among co-sponsoring agencies and organizations, 39 (73%) sponsored custodial facilities. Most of these were county homes for the mentally retarded, handicapped, and the aged; two were prisons. Of the remainder, six were CAP agencies, four Goodwill Industry organizations, and the rest were neighborhood centers, welfare, migrant or family service agencies. Only 2 were businesses and industries. Eight merged areas had 0-3 collaborating agencies responding, five areas had 4-7, and two areas 9-15.

Nearly half of the co-sponsors reported that they were highly involved in the day-to-day operation of ABE classes. Only a quarter of the respondents indicated minimal involvement. Although the involvement of co-sponsors was substantial, coordinators, as reported earlier, did not feel this involvement led to undue interference with the ABE program.

How do co-sponsors determine whether or not they need ABE classes? The answer is found in Table 16.

Table 16

How Co-Sponsors Determine Need for ABE Classes

| Method | Co-Sponsors* (in percent) |
|---|---|
| Examination of employee records and indicated need | 61 |
| Employees or clients request classes | 24 |
| Co-sponsors desired to upgrade employee skills | 34 |
| Co-sponsor employed or served many non-English speaking | 3 |
| ABE representatives convinced co-sponsor of need | 36 |
| Other | 13 |

* Co-sponsor could report more than one method of need assessment.

The proportion of cases reported in Table 16 in which co-sponsorship resulted from a representative of the ABE program convincing the co-sponsor of his need for collaborating is significant. It is also illuminating that in the two merged areas with the greatest numbers of co-sponsored classes, co-sponsors reported the largest proportion of such classes were the results of ABE persuasion. Results of the co-sponsor questionnaire further indicate that in the majority of cases (59%), the ABE program contacted the co-sponsor regarding co-sponsorship rather than the reverse. In only 6% of the cases did the co-sponsor indicate initial contact. This evidence suggests that those ABE programs in Iowa which have co-sponsored classes have them as a result of the ABE program's initiative. The existence of co-sponsored classes is evidence of active leadership within the ABE program within a merged area.

Research has shown that when an employer offers released time from work for employees to participate in ABE, the classes have a considerably

greater chance of success. Although in most cases (71%) the provision of released time was not applicable to the co-sponsors responding to the questionnaire, 18% indicated that they provided released time for ABE participation. In view of the large proportion of custodial care institutions for which this provision was not applicable, this is a significant total.

How successful has ABE been in meeting co-sponsor needs in Iowa? To answer this question, co-sponsors were asked to rate (on a 5 point scale) the success of ABE in meeting several needs. The results are as follows:

Table 17

ABE Success in Meeting Co-Sponsor Needs

| Need | Co-Sponsors Reporting High Degree of Success (in percent) |
|---|---|
| Upgrade employee or client skills | 60 |
| Increase of employees English language proficiency | 17 |
| Increase of employee morale | 65 |
| Afford employee opportunity to advance withn within organization | 30 |

For a significant number of co-sponsors the ABE program has been highly successful in upgrading employee skills and in increasing morale.

An overwhelming 94% of the co-sponsors report that there have been no drawbacks to co-sponsoring classes with ABE, and 84% of the co-sponsors report that students were highly satisfied with the ABE classes.

Over two-thirds of the co-sponsors report that when there is a problem

with the ABE classes it is the teacher they contact; a fourth contact the ABE coordinator. A quarter of the co-sponsors did not answer the question leading one to suspect that they have never experienced a problem.

A final question in the co-sponsor questionnaire asked respondents to indicate why they had selected the ABE program for co-sponsorship rather than providing the service themselves or co-sponsoring with another ABE program. Three-fourths indicated that the ABE program was the best available. Nearly as large a proportion of respondents made the decision to co-sponsor because ABE did not charge them for the service. Two-fifths indicated that the ABE program was the only program of which they were aware, and one fifth reported that their membership or clients wanted the ABE program.

Interpretative Summary

Given existing constraints, the Evaluation Committee felt that the statewide program would be operating as it should only if area coordinators gave their highest priority to collaborative relationships. Two-thirds do not do so, according to their own reports. In view of the commonly expressed concern over reaching the hardest to reach with ABE, this is particularly curious inasmuch as one would expect the most productive linkages with this target population would be welfare, employment, and religious agencies and organizations.

Coordinators need to exchange views and seek consensus on the value of different agencies and organizations as co-sponsors. In particular, the differences of emphasis on collaboration with schools requires explanation. Why in the urban centers do coordinators place so limited a

value on business and industry as collaborators, and, in fact, have almost no co-sponsored classes with them, requires clarification. Why do less than half the coordinators consider CAP and employment agencies of high importance and three-fourths consider churches of little importance? These value judgments are at variance with national practice. They may be justified in Iowa, but leaders should seek a common rationale for current experience in this area. The discrepancies between the Evaluation Committee and the coordinators suggest this has not been done.

Coordinator disagreement on the importance of provision of such support services as child care, counseling, and transportation by collaborating organizations is another specific topic for inclusion on an agenda for discussion and an exchange of experience. The common problem of limited program flexibility resulting from collaboration might also be profitably explored and cooperative solutions sought.

An important item for coordinator staff development should deal with the wide discrepancies identified both in terms of expectations and current practice regarding the proportion of ABE classes which should be and are co-sponsored. The Committee thought that 65% should be co-sponsored. Coordinators reported 32% co-sponsored, and practice varied among them from 2% to 95%. This is too great a degree of variance to be accounted for by differences among the merged areas in terms of urbanization, target populations, and so forth. Clearly, there is a difference in conception of the value of co-sponsorship which needs to be made explicit and rational standards should be set for practice in areas of similar demographic and other characteristics.

Coordinators need to look searchingly into the fact that nearly

three-fourths of the co-sponsors responding to their request to provide information about relationships with ABE were custodial facilities. Beyond these generally receptive and easily negotiated co-sponsored arrangements, and despite the fact that 61% of the coordinators report using specialized community liaison staff, co-sponsorship is extremely sparse and spotty.

Why do half the merged areas report 0-3 co-sponsored classes when so many coordinators report that they assign a high priority on collaborative relationships? With a couple of notable exceptions, it appears that limited effort is made to foster co-sponsorship beyond contacting the county institution for the handicapped or mentally retarded. The most provocative finding in this section is that if co-sponsorship exists, it does so as a direct result of the initiative of the ABE program. Given the existence of potential co-sponsors, if a coordinator is willing and able to devote his efforts in convincing them of the value of collaboration, he will have a stronger program than if he does not.* The fact that most do not suggests that coordinators generally place a low value on co-sponsorship, do not have potential co-sponsors in their merged area, or are unwilling or unable to take the necessary initiative to affect this relationship. These matters need to be studied closely by leaders within Iowa's ABE program. Should there be a set of standards or guidelines, recognizing local differences among the merged areas, governing

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* Coordinators in areas with the highest proportion of co-sponsors who attribute their collaboration to the initiative of the ABE representative rated High on the Professionalism Index.

the priority which should be placed on co-sponsorship in the Iowa ABE program?

While these questions need answering if there is to be coherent statewide effort, coordinators should be encouraged by the fact that almost all co-sponsors report no drawbacks to their collaboration with ABE, and 84% report that students are highly satisfied with the program.

EXTENDED ANALYSES

## ABE STUDENTS

A brief questionnaire concerning their reasons for attending adult basic education classes, what they are learning, and what they like and dislike about their classes was completed by 726 ABE students. The findings presented in this chapter are based upon their responses to this questionnaire. There are five main sections in this chapter: (1) a brief description of the student population; (2) a report on what students most want to learn; (3) a presentation of students' perceptions of what their teachers emphasize most in class; (4) a report on how students like to learn; and (5) a note on what aspects of ABE instruction students find annoying. In each section, significant differences between different groups of students, such as those in urben and rural programs and in different merged areas are noted, and important relationships among student characteristics and preferences pinpointed. These findings should enable administrators and teachers to (1) compare the student population in their own merged area with that in other merged areas; (2) determine if the subject matter and instructional processes in their classes match the priorities and preferences of the students; and (3) recognize areas in which changes in program operation might contribute to increased student retention, and a more sensitive response to student learning needs and goals.

### The Student Population

Of the students who responded to the questionnaire 71% were women, and 29% were men. If these proportions are a correct reflection of the statewide student enrollment (or attendance) patterns, Iowa is among the states with the highest proportion of enrolled students who are women.

This is true despite the fact that Iowa's 1970 census figures show that more men than women over 25 years of age lack a high school diploma.

Statewide, one fifth of respondent students were under 21 years of age, two-fifths were between 21 and 35, and one-tenth over 55. The proportion of responding students under 21 years of age is significantly higher than the proportion of Iowa adults lacking a high school diploma who are under 21. Some merged areas have markedly different age distributions among their students. In three merged areas, 40-50% of the students responding were under 21; in another, 40% of the respondents were over 55.

Students were asked whether they lived in an urban, rural, or suburban community. 50% said urban, 40% rural, and the remainder suburban. While "urban" is an ambiguous term, this finding is surprising, and may indicate that undereducated, isolated rural adults are not being reached effectively.

How Students See Their Progress

Asked how well they felt they were doing in class, students' responses were almost evenly divided into three groups: Fairly Well, Well, and Very Well. Only 20 out of 710 said Not Very Well, while 50 said, Terrific.

Students are more likely to feel they are doing well if they are getting enough information about how long it will take them to reach their goals. Nine-tenths of all students feel they are getting adequate information on how well they are doing. Younger students are somewhat more likely to feel they are not getting enough feedback. Not getting sufficient feedback tends to create uncertainty about how long it will take them to reach their educational goals and doubts about how well one is doing.

Over half of responding students say it is clear how long it will take them to reach their educational goals. Just over one-third are unsure, and the remainder are not clear about how long it will take. Those who are clear about how long it will take are more likely to have talked to a counselor, and tend to feel they are doing well.

Reason for Attending ABE Class

Earn a High School Diploma is the most important reason for attending ABE classes for almost one-half of Iowa's ABE students. The proportion of students seeking a GED varies from one merged area to another. About two-thirds of the students in merged areas 2, 5, 10, and 16 give getting a GED as their primary reason for returning to school. In merged areas 3, 4, and 11, only one quarter to one third of the students who responded to the questionnaire indicated this was their primary goal.

Among students attending for reasons other than attaining a high school diploma, half are in search of General Self Improvement and one quarter give their primary reason to Improve (my) Job Situation. Whereas only one out of eight students statewide is primarily concerned with improving his or her job situation, one out of three students in merged area 6 and one out of five in merged areas 7 and 15 are primarily interested in bettering their job situation.

Improved knowledge of the English Language is unimportant except in merged areas 11, 12, and 13, where between almost one quarter of the students responding gave this as their primary reason for returning to school.

Students who are working toward their high school diploma are somewhat younger than the student population as a whole. Students under 21

years of age are much more likely to be going for their GED than are students in older age groups. Men and women are urban and rural students are equally likely to be working toward their high school diploma. Students who give earning a high school diploma as their primary reason for returning to school are neither more nor less likely than other students to feel they are doing well.

Counseling

Just over one third of students who responded to the questionnaire reported they had talked to a counselor. There are sizeable differences between merged areas; while in two merged areas, less than 10 percent of the students have talked with a counselor, 40% or more have talked to a counselor in six merged areas. In one merged area, 57% of the students polled had received counseling.

Most students who talk to counselors seem to talk about a variety of topics. There are three major constellations of concern. Students may talk about job and family related matters and financial concerns. They may talk about their class work and how to reach their educational goals. Finally, they may talk about job related matters and their educational goals.

When students have had an opportunity to talk with a counselor about reaching their educational goals, they tend to feel better about their progress, and to be clearer about how long it will take them to reach their goals.

Older students and female students are less likely to have talked to a counselor than are younger or male students.

Although the likelihood of having received counseling is equal for

those who are going for their GED and those who are not, the topics discussed are different. GED students are more likely to discuss class work and how to reach their educational goals. They are less likely to discuss job or family related matters or financial problems.

What Students Want to Learn

Students were asked, "What have you learned in class that is of most importance to you?" Reading, Writing, and Speaking was the most important set of skills learned for 53% of the students responding, and the second most important for an additional 32%. Here again, there were surprising differences among merged areas. While 70% ranked reading, writing, and speaking to be their most important learning in two merged areas, in two other areas, less than one out of three responding students agreed.

Two-thirds of the students who do not find improved reading, writing, and speaking skills to be most important give first rank to their improved skills in mathematics. The perceived importance of increased mathematics skills also varies, with 50% or more giving math first place in three merged areas, while only about one fifth of the students in three other areas attach similar importance to math.

Two-thirds of the students responding to the questionnaire ranked reading and math as the two most important subject areas. One-third said that one of the "non-traditional" areas -- health and nutrition, shopping and family budgets, job applications, and job interviews, or social and political issues -- was either first or second in importance. Among these non-traditional subject areas, there are relatively small differences in the importance to students.

For each subject area, there is a high positive correlation between

how important a student feels what he or she has learned has been and how much emphasis the student feels his or her teacher place on the subject area. (Correlations = .47 to .59) Do teachers shift their emphasis in response to student interests? Or, do students simply learn more in areas that teachers emphasize, and therefore attach greatest importance to what they have learned in these areas?

While there is a significant correlation between wanting more emphasis on the 3 R's and (a) ranking reading and math the two most important subjects learned, and (b) ranking reading and math high in terms of teacher emphasis, these correlations are surprisingly low (.14 - .15).

There are consistent differences between students whose primary reason for returning to school is to get a high school diploma and those with other reasons. GED-seeking students place greater importance on the mathematics they have learned (45% vs. 28% of non-GED oriented students put increased mathematics skills in first place) and less importance on reading, writing, and speaking (44% vs. 60% rank reading, writing, and speaking in first place). Despite this, it is <u>not</u> true that merged areas in which larger than average proportions of students say getting a GED is their goal are the same as the merged areas in which students place greater importance on the mathematics they have learned.

Asked to indicate which <u>one</u> subject they would most like to learn more about in class, just under one-third of respondents chose reading, writing, and speaking, and an almost equal number chose math. The rest of the responses were scattered: shopping and budgets (12.5%), job applications and job interviews (10.7%), health and nutrition (9.3%), and finally social and political issues (4.0%). It is noteworthy that the proportion of students who want to learn more in a non-traditional

area, one-third is the same proportion who ranked one of these non-traditional subjects either first or second in importance of all that they had learned. The relative importance of each of the four non-traditional subjects, however, is different. Job Applications and Job Interviews was least important in terms of importance attributed to previous learning, but it was second in terms of the proportion of students choosing it as the area in which they would like to learn more. Similarly, whereas health and nutrition was the highest ranked non-traditional subject in terms of importance attributed to previous learning, a small proportion of students chose it as the one area in which they would like to learn more.

Students who gave as their primary reason for returning to school to earn a high school diploma are more likely than other students to want to learn more in the area of mathematics, and less likely than other students to want to learn more in the area of reading, writing, and speaking. Students in individual merged areas have substantially different emphases than those indicated by the statewide data.

Two questions dealt explicitly with the relative emphasis which should be placed on the 3 R's and Problems of Every Day Living, and the desirability of increased class discussion of the problems of every day living. 71% of the students responded to the question of emphasis in favor of the 3 R's and 29% in favor of problems of every day living. Half of respondents in merged areas 4, 10, and 12 would like to have the problems of every day living emphasized more than the 3 R's.

Students working toward their high school diploma are neither more nor less likely to be in favor of the 3 R's or against more class discussion about problems of every day living.

Students who consider thei community to be urban are more likely to favor more class discussion about problems of everyday living. They also rank their gain in reading skills higher in importance than do other students. Older students are more likely to favor emphasizing the 3 R's over problems of every day living.

Teacher Emphasis as Seen by Students

Statewide, 60% of the responding students feel their teachers place greatest emphasis on reading, writing, and speaking, and over 90% rank their teacher's emphasis on reading, writing, and speaking as high. 35% of students report that their teachers emphasize math most, and over 80% rank their teachers' emphasis on mathematics as high. Taking communications and computation skills together, 80% of the responding students see these as the two subjects most emphasized, although only 65% see them as the two subjects in which their learning gains have been most important. Students place a higher value on learning non-traditional subjects than they report their teachers place on teaching them.

Teacher emphasis as reported by students varied from one merged area to another, particularly the relative emphasis placed on reading and mathematics. The proportion of students who say teachers place most emphasis on reading, writing, and speaking ranges from 20% to 88%; the proportion seeing mathematics as receiving most emphasis ranges from 11% to 61%.

Students working toward their GED perceive teachers as placing less emphasis on reading, writing, and speaking, and more emphasis on mathematics than do students who have returned to school for other reasons.

This difference parallels the difference in value placed on learning gains in these two subject areas by these two different groups of students.

Younger students are likely to place higher value on what they have learned, and to perceived greater teacher emphasis, in the area of job applications and job interviews.

The Instructional Process: What's Liked, What's Helpful

Students were asked to rank their preference for learning in each of four different ways (1) with all students in the class as a whole; (2) in the class divided into small groups; (3) through self study with teacher giving help as needed; and (4) in the learning center. On the basis of average rank assigned, the preferred method is self study, followed by small groups, and the class as a whole. Two-thirds of responding students indicated that working in a learning center was their least preferred way to learn

There is no relationship between how students like to learn and what learning they find most important. Students who see their teachers placing high emphasis on math particularly favor self-study. Students who are working toward their GED are also particularly favorable to self study, and somewhat less in favor of small group learning than the student population as a whole. There was no relationship between how students like to learn and either their preference for the 3 R's over problems of every day living or their desire for more discussion of problems.

There are some differences between merged areas, particularly in students' preference for small group learning and self study with

teacher help. Inasmuch as effective use of small groups requires specific teaching skills, this may be a reflection of the frequency and skill with which teachers in fact use this technique.

Students were asked to rank five teaching activities in terms of how helpful they seemed to be in enabling them to learn. The five activities were: (1) answering questions, (2) asking questions, (3) correcting lessons, (4) encouraging discussion, and (5) providing time for practice and drill.

Students indicated that teachers are most helpful when they answer questions. Correcting lessons and encouraging discussions were seen as moderately helpful. Asking questions and providing time for practice and drill are seen as least helpful. Their teachers' role in answering questions is seen as particularly important by students who favor self-study. Students who like learning in small groups particularly appreciate teachers correcting their lessons, and see little value in questioning by the teacher. Students working toward their GED and students concerned with learning math find having the teacher respond to their questions particularly valuable.

Class Annoyances

Ten common class annoyances were listed, and respondents were asked to check up to three which annoy them and other students in their class. Many students simply skipped this question, perhaps indicating that none of the possible annoyances in fact bothered them.

Just under one-tenth of the responding students are annoyed by (1) Uninteresting Materials or (2) Some Students Too Far Ahead, Others Too Far Behind.

Seven to eight percent of the responding students are annoyed by (1) New Students Entering or Absent Students Returning; (2) Not Being Able to Get Help When It Is Needed, and (3) Class Goes Too Slowly.

Other possible annoyances, with the percentage of students who are in fact annoyed are: Class Goes Too Fast (5.6%), Other Students Not Friendly (4.3%), Teacher Is Not Clear (2.9%), Students Not Treated As Adults (2.3%), and Teacher Not Fair or Friendly (1.2%).

Doing Well...

Students are more likely to feel they are doing well if they have enough feedback on their progress and are clear about how long it will take them to reach their goals. While students who feel they are doing well place high value on what they have learned in reading, writing, and speaking, they do not perceive their teachers to be emphasizing communication skills and mathematics to the exclusion of other, non-traditional subjects, and would like even more emphasis on the problems of every day living.

Students who feel they are doing well tend to be annoyed because the class is going too slowly, although differences in their fellow students' achievement levels do not bother them. They are less enthusiastic about self-study with teacher help as needed, and are annoyed if they can't get help when they need it. However, they do feel that the teacher is clear and understandable.

Interpretative Summary

This section raises a number of questions which call for answers. Is the program adequately reaching rural students? Why the large

differences in age among students in different merged areas. How does the merged area with 40% of its students over the age of 55 reach this group so well?

One cannot lightly dismiss the fact that students seem equally divided among those who feel they are doing less than well and those who feel they are doing more than well. Teachers should give students more feedback on their progress. Half the students in the program are not clear about how long it will take them to reach their educational goals. This factor and the adequacy of feedback on progress are the key to students feeling they are doing well. The need for counseling is widespread and clearly felt by students. Those in merged areas in which there is no counseling are being discriminated against and should be entitled to equal treatment throughout the state.

Everyone in ABE in Iowa should be reminded that less than half the students see the GED as their most important reason for participation in the program. Self improvement and improving their job situation is of even greater importance for large proportions of the student body. Leaders in Iowa should not let the GED orientation overshadow other equally legitimate interests of students. Differentiated curricula should accommodate each group. Individualized instruction should mean individualizing what is taught to meet the needs and interests of the learner, not simply one-to-one instruction.

Why the marked difference among areas in the emphasis given reading and writing, arithmetic, and "non-traditional" content areas? A third of the students consider the non-traditional content areas of major importance and want more emphasis given them.

There is much less emphasis given to small learning groups than students would welcome. While teachers and students prefer individualized instruction, the teacher must make arrangements to creatively engage the rest of the class while giving such instruction. It is here that the imaginative use of small learning groups and of aides can be of real help. This is a strong lead for another area of emphasis on demonstration and in-service education for teachers.

Students in Iowa do not like teachers posing questions or conducting drill sessions or teaching the class as a whole very often. Teachers should understand this and be assisted to find alternative methods. Uninteresting materials and the heterogeneity of performance levels among fellow students are the most commonly voiced student annoyances. The former suggests more local initiative in materials development and adaptation, the latter the need for using learning groups.

## ABE TEACHERS

This chapter provides an overview of the instructional staff of Iowa's ABE program. There is a brief initial section with descriptive data on teacher characteristics and on the nature of the classes they teach. However, the major portion of this section will present findings from exploratory analyses done in an attempt to find possible causes and effects of the often differing opinions and practices which have been discussed in earlier chapters. Specifically, there will be five sections: (1) a comparison of inexperienced and experienced teachers; (2) a comparison of teachers who place overriding emphasis on the 3 R's with teachers who place relatively less emphasis on the 3 R's; (3) a look at the differences between more and less effective teachers, as measured by absentee and dropout rates; (4) a brief exploration of differences between merged areas which might influence instructional practice, and (5) a review of teachers' perceptions of their students.

### Descriptive Data

The typical teacher is a white woman who may have worked as an elementary or secondary school teacher, then gotten married and raised a family, and who, now 41 years of age, has been teaching evening ABE classes part-time for three years. 79% of Iowa's ABE teachers are women, and 96% are white. One-fifth of Iowa ABE teachers are under 30 and one-tenth are 60 years old or more. The youngest teacher is 22 and the oldest 79.

Data from the teacher questionnaire shows that the great majority (93%) of Iowa ABE teachers work part-time at their ABE jobs. Most of those who are part-time have full-time occupation as homemakers (50%),

secondary school teachers (20%), or elementary school teachers (10%). Of those few teachers who teach full-time in the ABE program, 50% are former elementary or secondary school teachers, 13% are former homemakers, and 40% list other previous full-time occupations.

48% of the teachers report that they teach both high school completion and basic education, 24% teach only high school completion, 9% teach basic education for the native born, and 3% are ESL teachers. 6% of the teachers specified "other" when asked what they teach. These figures indicate that ABE in Iowa has a marked high school completion focus. In terms of grade level, 26% of the teachers teach advanced students (grades 9-12), 15% teacher intermediate students (grades 5-8), and 12% teach beginning level students (grades 0-4) -- Iowa's first priority target group.

When asked how many years of ABE teaching experience they had had, teachers responded as follows:

Table 18

Years of ABE Teaching Experience

| Years | % of Teachers |
|---|---|
| 1 | 34 |
| 2 | 8 |
| 3 | 13 |
| 4 | 13 |
| 5 | 12 |
| 6 | 8 |
| 7 | 7 |
| 8 | 5 |

Mean = 3.4 years, median = 3.1 years, mode = 1 year

Thus a majority (55%) of the teachers have had less than three years experience, with the largest proportion by far reporting one year of experience.

Three fifths of the teachers report that they teach only in the evening; 22% teach only in the daytime, and 18% teach both day and evening classes.

Experienced vs. Inexperienced Teachers

For the purposes of the data analysis reported here, an ABE teacher was considered "experienced" if he or she had had over two years of experience teaching ABE. "Inexperienced" teachers were those with only one, or at most, two years of teaching experience.

One striking difference between these two groups of teachers is that more experienced teachers are more likely to report 10% or less absenteeism than are less experienced teachers. One-half or more experienced teachers report low rates of absenteeism, while only one-third of the less experienced teachers have such low absenteeism in their classes.

More experienced teachers, logically, are more likely to have had in-service training. More experienced teachers are more likely to disagree strongly with the statement that in-service education is inadequate than are less experienced teachers. This despite the fact that more experienced teachers indicate a greater gap between ideal and the actual number of days involved in in-service training in a given year. 79% or more experienced teachers disagree or disagree strongly that in-service education might be characterized as inadequate, while only 66% of less experienced teachers disagree. More experienced teachers are more likely

to consider their preparation "very adequate" and are almost twice as likely to be over 40 years old.

Experienced teachers agree more strongly than do inexperienced teachers that the coordinator is aware of their most important problems as class room teachers. This may be because they have developed stronger relationships with their coordinators, because they no longer have some of the problems which are associated with inexperience, or because they would not have continued teaching if they still had such problems.

Differences in Intended Practice

In each of the areas of practice to be discussed here, it should be noted that overall current practice, as described by teachers who responded to Form B of the teacher questionnaire, usually just matches the intent of experienced teachers. There are at least two possible explanations for this. In the first place, the intentions of inexperienced teachers may be not realistic in terms of the needs of the students with whom they are working. Or, these intentions may be realistic but unrealizable given the constraints of the existing programs and expectations of the coordinator and colleagues who evaluate their performance and who have established and devend the pattern of current practice, causing them over time to readjust their intentions to what is feasible. If this pattern of current practice matching the intent of more experienced teachers exists within a given merged area, as it does on a statewide basis, the question of why this pattern emerges might well be a fruitful one for coordinators and leaders to explore together.

Almost twice as many inexperienced teachers as experienced older

teachers intend to place high emphasis on coping skills. 42% of inexperienced teachers indicated that coping skills should receive first or second priority; only 24% of experienced teachers agreed. In reporting current practice, 24% of all teachers reported that coping skills do receive first or second priority.

Four-fifths of more experienced teachers indicated that less than 10% of the instructional materials used in ABE classes should be developed by local group effort, and no experienced teachers indicated that over 25% of the materials should be developed this way. Among inexperienced teachers, only two-thirds felt that less than 10% of the materials should be developed by local group effort, and 11% felt that over 25% of the materials should come from this source. In current practice, 87% of the teachers who responded to form B reported that less than 10% are in fact developed through local group effort.

Two-thirds of less experienced teachers feel that teacher-student conferences should receive first priority in undertaking periodic reviews of student progress. Only half of the more experienced teachers agree, and only half of all teachers report that teacher-student conferences currently receive first priority.

While over one-quarter of more experienced teachers say little or no emphasis should be placed on individual assignments to accommodate differences among students, less than ten percent of less experienced teachers similarly de-emphasize the use of individual assignments. Once again, current practice matches the intent of more experienced teachers.

Experienced teachers are more likely than inexperienced teachers to see a need for three or more days of in-service education a year.

Both groups feel that there should be considerably more in-service education than is currently available.

Instruction through student participation in small group discussion and problem solving is universally considered particularly appropriate to adult education. Yet one quarter of inexperienced teachers see this as one of the least desirable ways for students to participate in their instruction and under one-half say it is even moderately desirable. Among more experienced teachers, almost three quarters say it is moderately desirable and only one in twenty sees small group discussion and problem solving as one of the least desirable ways in which students might participate in their instruction. In intent, then, more experienced teachers are more favorable to this approach than are less experienced teachers.

More experienced teachers also use small group discussion and problem solving to a greater extent in current practice, with almost three out of four ranking this method as one of the two most frequently used ways of having students participate. What is interesting is that in current practice experienced teachers use this approach more often -- at least relative to other possible ways of fostering student participation -- than they feel they should. For less experienced teachers, current practice is very close to intended practice, though lower than the intended priority indicated by more experienced teachers.

Most of the differences in current practice are in the area of in-service education. There are different emphases on different forms of in-service education, which probably are a natural reflection of what kinds of in-service orientation are needed for beginning teachers.

Thus, while novice-master assignments generally receive little emphasis, with two-thirds of each group reporting little or no emphasis on this form of in-service education, one out of seven less experienced teachers report high emphasis (rank 1 or 2) on this form of in-service education. Similarly, over twice as many inexperienced as experienced teachers -- almost half -- report heavy emphasis on coaching. For more experienced teachers, local workshops and conferences are more important, with almost 9 out of 10 experienced teachers, but only 7 out of 10 less experienced teachers indicating that local workshops rank first or second in importance. By a margin of almost two to one experienced teachers are also more likely to rank workshops and conferences conducted by others, institutions outside the local program, first or second in importance.

In terms of topics treated in in-service education programs, the two groups have similar views. The one exception to this is "philosophy of adult education," which more experienced teachers feel is emphasized more heavily than do less experienced teachers. The two groups of teachers agree on the amount of emphasis philosophy of adult education should receive, but experienced teachers have been exposed more often to these concepts.

Another area in which there are differences in current practice between more and less experienced teachers is in their use of programmed materials and the role of the learning center. Experienced teachers are less likely to send students to a learning center to accommodate individual needs or to use instruction in a learning center as an integral part of the curriculum. Both groups of teachers

feel that the learning center should play a greater role than it currently does both for accommodating individual needs and as an integral part of the curriculum. Experienced teachers are less likely than are inexperienced teachers to use programmed materials in classroom instruction. Less experienced teachers feel that they should be using them less than they are. Perhaps inexperienced teachers use programmed materials more because they are easy to use, but dislike using them because they limit teacher-student interaction and take the creativity out of teaching, while more experienced teachers use them when appropriate, having discovered that they are effective for some purposes.

Traditional vs. Non-Traditional Teachers

The rubric "traditional" has been chosen to describe those teachers who indicated that they do or should emphasize reading, writing, and speaking and mathematics as the top two subject areas. "Non-traditional" then, describes teachers who placed another subject area, i.e., health education, consumer education, social studies/civics, or coping in either or both first and second place when asked to rank subject areas by current or intended emphasis. There is no relationship between years of experience and traditional or non-traditional emphasis. 58% of Iowa's ABE teachers are traditional, 42% non-traditional.

The validity of this distinction is confirmed by the fact that "traditional" teachers are less likely than "non-traditional" teachers to place high priority on the goal of fostering "increased ability to cope with adult life roles and problems." In both intended and current practice, only one third of the traditional teachers say this is one of their top two goals, and over one fourth say this is among the two

least important goals of ABE. Among non-traditional teachers, on the other hand, one half or more state that this is or should be one of the two most important goals, and less than one in ten state it is or should be one of the least important.

All teachers in the "traditional" group place math in first or second place, but less than one in twenty teachers in the "non-traditional" group give similar importance to math. For almost all teachers, reading, writing, and speaking is one of their two top priority subject areas. One-third or more of the non-traditional teachers indicate mathematics is or should be one of the two least important subject areas.

The greatest difference between the two groups, in terms of emphasis on different non-traditional subjects, is in the area of coping skills, which three quarters of the non-traditional teachers believe should be one of the two top subject areas, and over one half say it <u>is</u> one of the two most important. They also place more emphasis on health and nutrition and social studies/civics than to traditional teachers in both current and intended practice. However, both groups report about the same emphasis to consumer education in actual practice.

Non-traditional and traditional teachers differ both in intended and in current practice in the area of materials development. In terms of intended practice, although almost half of both groups of teachers fell that one half or less of the materials used in ABE instruction should be used as commercially published, traditional teachers are more than twice as likely as non-traditional teachers to believe that three-quarters or more of materials used should be of this type. In actual practice, half of traditional teachers but just under one third of

non-traditional teachers report that 75% or more of the materials they use are used as commercially published. Only seven percent of traditional teachers indicate that one-quarter or less of the materials are used as commercially published, while one out of five non-traditional teachers indicate that this is the case.

Non-traditional teachers also see more of a place for materials developed through local group effort than do traditional teachers. Almost twice as many traditional as non-traditional teachers state that no materials should be developed this way. While almost three-quarters say that a small portion (1-25%) of materials should be cooperatively developed locally, only half of traditional teachers agree. The differences in actual practice are more striking. Among traditional teachers, three quarters report no materials are developed in this way, while only half of non-traditional teachers indicate this to be the case. While only one traditional teacher indicated that over 25% of his or her materials were developed in this way, one out of ten non-traditional teachers uses over 25% of the materials from this source.

Almost all traditional teachers, but only 62% of non-traditional teachers say that reading, writing, and speaking should be the most important subject area. Seventeen percent of the non-traditional teachers place it in third or fourth place. Although 13% of non-traditional teachers say that consumer education should be one of the two most important subject areas, 45% of the traditional teachers say it should be one of the two least important.

Non-traditional teachers are more aware of the need to adapt commercially available materials for local use. Seven out of ten say that

between 11% and 50% of the materials used in ABE classes should be adapted, while less than half of the traditional teachers agree. 48% of the traditional teachers say that 10 percent or less of materials used should be adapted; less than half as many non-traditional teachers feel this way.

Non-traditional teachers place more emphasis on the use of student records for counseling students. 57% of non-traditional teachers, but only 37% of traditional teachers say high emphasis should be placed on this use of student records. Only 7% of non-traditional teachers, but 22% of traditional teachers, say little emphasis should be placed on using student records to counsel students. Non-traditional teachers also tend to believe student records should be emphasized more heavily on placing students in class than do traditional teachers.

Traditional teachers believe that greater emphasis <u>should</u> be placed on grouping similar students to accommodate differences than do non-traditional teachers. Interestingly, intended and current practice are the same in this regard for non-traditional teachers, while traditional teachers in <u>actual practice</u> report significantly less emphasis on this method of accommodating student differences than either they themselves intend or non-traditional teachers actually practice.

Non-traditional teachers see somewhat more need for in-service education than do traditional teachers. Whereas more than one in ten traditional teachers responded "none" when asked "approximately how many days per year of in-service education do you feel you <u>should</u> have in order to maintain or enhance your performance as an ABE teacher?", not a single non-traditional teacher agreed. More non-traditional

teachers responded "five or more" to this question than did traditional teachers; on the other hand, non-traditional teachers were more likely to say "2 days" and traditional teachers "3-4 days."

For all teachers, the amount of emphasis which should be given to the following two topics in in-service education (1) diagnosis of student needs, testing and evaluating achievement; student program prescription, and (2) teaching "coping" skills, is significantly higher than the emphasis given these topics in actual practice. Non-traditional teachers feel that these topics should receive more emphasis than do traditional teachers. Whereas less than half of all teachers report that diagnosis and evaluation receives high emphasis in in-service programs, 59% of traditional teachers and 70% of non-traditional teachers believe that it should receive high emphasis. While only 22% of all teachers report that teaching coping skills receives high emphasis in in-service education, 38% of traditional and 58% of non-traditional teachers believe that it should receive high emphasis.

There are significant differences in two goals emphasized by traditional and non-traditional teachers. The emphasis placed on these two goals also affects dropout rates. Non-traditional teachers place greater emphasis on "increased self-confidence of students" than do traditional teachers. Whereas 62% of non-traditional teachers say this is their main goal, and 25% place it second, only 39% of traditional teachers place it in first place, and 25% give second place to enhancing student self-confidence. It is interesting that in intended practice, these two groups do not differ significantly, and that overall intended practice falls mid-way in between the current practice of the two groups. Almost half of the traditional teachers rank Prepare for

the GED as one of their two most important goals, and only one-third place it 5th or 6th. Half as many non-traditional teachers place Prepare for the GED in first place, and twice as many place it in 5th or 6th place. Intended practice is not significantly different between the two groups; and is closer to the actual practice of the non-traditional teachers than the practice of the traditional teachers. Since placing high emphasis on fostering student self-confidence and relatively less emphasis on Preparing for the GED both encourage higher retention, it might be better if teachers followed their intentions in this regard.

Other ways that non-traditional teachers differ from their more traditional colleagues in current practice are not surprising. Non-traditional teachers use more teacher-developed materials. They are twice as likely as their colleagues to never administer diagnostic placement tests (40% vs. 19%), and more likely to rank teacher observation in first place as the most important source of information in evaluating students. It is interesting that they do not feel that this should be the case. Perhaps they are forced to rely on observation because there are no appropriate tests -- either teacher developed or standardized, which measure the kinds of learning outcomes in which they are most interested.

Non-traditional teachers place more current emphasis on using records to refer students to other programs, employers, etc. One in three non-traditional teachers places high emphasis on this use of student records, while only one in seven traditional teachers emphasizes using records for this purpose. Both groups feel that records should be used for this purpose to an even greater extent than non-traditional

teachers actually do. Non-traditional teachers also report that they put more emphasis on helping students with personal and vocational problems than do traditional teachers, with 63% of non-traditional teachers and only 48% of traditional teachers reporting high or great emphasis on this role.

There is a significant difference between traditional and non-traditional teachers in the amount of emphasis they report is actually placed on Improving Human Relations: Teacher-Student in the in-service programs they attend. 66% of non-traditional teachers, but only 40% of traditional teachers report high emphasis on this topic. The opinions between these two groups when asked what should be the emphasis placed on this topic in in-service education programs, were diametrically opposed. That is, non-traditional teachers feel that less emphasis should be placed on this topic than currently is, and traditional teachers feel that more emphasis should be placed on this topic. Perhaps traditional teachers have more difficulty relating to their students, and hence see more need for in-service education in this area? Or are non-traditional students simply more attuned to the problem, and hence more aware of the implications of a variety of areas of activity for human relations?

Factors Affecting Absenteeism and Dropout Rate

Some of the most provocative findings of this research study resulted from an analysis of teacher goals and instructional methods to absenteeism. There is compelling evidence that teachers who place a major emphasis on preparation for the high school equivalency examination as a goal of the ABE program have a markedly higher rate of student

absenteeism and that those who assign this goal a low priority have a lower rate of absenteeism. Table 19 presents the statewide picture of absenteeism.

Table 19

Student Absenteeism in ABE
(in percent)

| Students Absent | Teachers Reporting |
|---|---|
| over 50 | 7 |
| 26-50 | 30 |
| 11-23 | 20 |
| 10 and less | 44 |

Only 26% of teachers who rated Preparation for GED Exam high among their priority goals reported 10% or less absenteeism while 63% who rated this goal low among their priorities reported 10% or less absenteeism. And 72% who considered this goal as their lowest priority reported absenteeism of 10% or less.

These figures are striking. To some extent they reflect the influence of teachers who work with some institutionalized students, such as the aged or mentally retarded, for whom preparation for the GED is less likely to be a major goal. But this factor does not appear to account for all of the differences reported.

The evidence is strongly reinforced by comparing absenteeism in classes taught by traditional and non-traditional teachers, as defined earlier in this section. Absenteeism of 10% or less is reported by 53% of non-traditional teachers but only by 38% of traditional teachers. Rates of more than 25% was reported by only 25% of non-traditional

teachers but 46% of traditional teachers.

Very few teachers in Iowa use simulated learning experiences in the classroom such as role play, case studies, and learning games. It is startling to discover that all teachers who rank this method of instruction as the most important way to foster student participation report 10% or less absentee rates. Moreover, among teachers who report less than 25% absenteeism, the proportion who rank this method as second or third in importance is two to three times greater than for all teachers.

There is additional substantiating evidence in the data on dropout rates. Among teachers who report that fostering student self-confidence is their major goal, dropout rates tend to be higher for teachers who attach less importance to the goal of fostering student self-confidence.

Teachers assigning a relatively low priority to preparation for the GED examination also report lower dropout rates than do other teachers. Moreover, teachers who place second or third priority on "increased ability to cope with adult life roles and problems" report lower dropout rates than do teachers who consider this among the two or three least important goals for ABE instruction.

Statewide, approximately 1/3 of the teachers report 10% or fewer of their students dropout, 1/3 report dropout rates of 11-25%, and 1/3 report dropout rates greater than 25%. Mean dropout rates reported by teachers in a single merged district range from 5% to 32%. This spread in the distribution of dropout rates among teachers, and among merged districts in Iowa requires further study by those giving leadership to ABE.

Not surprisingly, teachers who report that a relatively low

proportion of their students are making satisfactory progress report high dropout rates. It stands to reason that a student who feels he or she is not getting very much out of ABE is more likely to discontinue. Do those teachers who report that less than 50% of their students are making satisfactory progress have unrealistic expectations and communicate their feeling that a student is not doing well, thus creating a discouragement factor?

Those teachers who indicate that they have Very Adequate preparation to teach ABE are somewhat more likely to report dropout rates of 10% or less than are teachers who indicate Adequate preparation, and less likely to report dropout rates in excess of 25%. Teachers who feel their preparation is inadequate report dropout rates over 25%.

Teacher satisfaction is linked to dropout rates they experience. Twice the proportion of the Very Satisfied teachers report dropout rates of 10% or less than did the Moderately Satisfied teachers.

Program Characteristics and Instruction

To determine whether the distribution of responses reported statewide reflected comparable distributions within the merged areas, responses to twelve questions on the teacher questionnaire were checked in six merged areas chosen from among the urban and non-urban programs. This selection of programs also enabled us to investigate whether or not program size or urban location influences teachers perceptions or practice. Program size proved of little relevance to the distribution of responses, i.e., the differences among teachers in reporting practices and perceptions. Similarly, no important or consistent urban-rural differences emerged.

We did find evidence of substantial consensus on some issues within different merged areas but great differences among merged areas. In some cases this would suggest good leadership within a merged area, in others a need for inter-area exchange of experience and ideas.

For example, twice the number of teachers in one smaller area felt programmed materials should be used with great frequency than those in another smaller area. A similar proportion differed on whether a learning center should provide individualized services for students who request them. Fifty percent more teachers in one area felt coping should receive heavy emphasis than in the other; 70% in the first called for great emphasis on GED preparation, only 20% in the second area. Twice as many teachers in the second area reported that coaching by the coordinator or supervisor was given heavy emphasis than in the first area and emphasis given involvement in university classes differed significantly.

There were great discrepancies among merged areas on the nature of instruction as well. Within the two medium sized programs analyzed, the following differences pertained in one all teachers indicated that one-to-one instructional interaction should receive heavy emphasis; in the other less than two thirds of the teachers agreed; in the first, more than half the teachers indicated that programmed instruction should be given great emphasis; less than a quarter of the teachers in the other merged area agreed. Twice the proportion of teachers assigned simulated learning situations as low value in one area than in the other. On the question of whether a learning center should provide individualized services to students who request them, over three times as many teachers

in one area felt that it should than in the other. More than three times the proportion of teachers in one area reported that the GED was given major emphasis than in the other area. In the latter area three times the proportion of teachers reported the GED to receive little emphasis.

Similar statistically significant discrepancies occurred in comparing the two large size programs in regard to emphasis given coaching and workshops conducted by others in in-service education.

Teachers perceptions and practices in the areas of goals for ABE instruction, instructional processes, use of the learning center, and format for in-service education were studied in three urban merged areas and three non-urban areas. Here again, although some consensus existed in some merged areas, disagreement was the rule rather than the exception, and the existence of disagreement within merged areas makes it difficult to even begin to identify possible urban-rural differences in perception and practice. Even on those items where some consensus emerged within a majority of the merged areas studied, there were no consistent urban-rural differences. The lack of relationship between either program size or urbanicity and variation in teachers' perceptions and practices leaves open the question of what <u>does</u> cause this variation.

Is evidence of such marked differences among merged areas desirable? In many cases one would be hard put to argue so. Leaders should examine these differences within their areas and between areas to make sure that decisions are based on as broad a body of experience as possible. The need for state level leadership in resolving many of these differences

and fostering a cooperative development of policy and program guidelines is suggested.

Teachers' Perceptions of Their Students

Two-thirds of Iowa's ABE teachers believe that most students are warm and friendly, neither hypersensitive to criticism nor inclined to resent authority. They said their students are not, on the whole, hard-core poor, and tend to be realistic about the time and effort required if they are to reach their educational goals. One teacher in seven believed that half or more of his or her students have unrealistic expectations. Student ambiguities over the time it will take them to reach their goals through ABE is not generally recognized by teachers.

There was much less agreement among teachers about whether their students are or are not highly motivated, lack self-confidence, work hard in class, or are low in intellectual ability. Just over one-fifth of the teachers believe that 75% or more of their students are highly motivated and that only between a quarter and a half of their students are highly motivated. Almost one teacher out of seven believes that less than a quarter of the students in his or her class are highly motivated. In two merged districts, less than half the teachers feel that most of their students are highly motivated, while in two others, 85-95% of the responding teachers believe that over half of their students are highly motivated. Similar differences of opinion emerge among teachers in a given merged area.

Lack of self-confidence is reported to pertain to half or more of their students by 55% of the teachers, less than half of their students by 45% and less than a quarter of their students by 18%. Differences of

opinion concerning student self-confidence are the rule rather than the exception among teachers in a given merged district. In two merged areas, over 60% of responding teachers feel that less than half their students are lacking in self-confidence; in two other districts, seven out of ten teachers feel that half or more of their students are so afflicted.

Given the majority view that most students lack self-confidence, it is understandable why fostering increased self-confidence is an important goal of ABE instruction for most teachers, and teachers who rank this as the most important goal tend to report dropout rates lower than other teachers.

Teacher responses to the item concerning the proportion of their students who have unrealistic expectations of the time and effort required again reveals significant differences between merged areas. Overall, half the teachers responding reported that less than one quarter of their students had unrealistic expectations. In some merged areas, however, two-thirds or more of the teachers were able to report that most of their students were being realistic. In other areas, only one-third, or in one case, one out of six, teachers felt that less than one-quarter of their students had unrealistic expectations. Since lack of realistic expectations may well be due to lack of information or counseling, these differences may arise because of differences in program operation or program philosophy.

The proportion of students identified as "low ability" students by teachers varies substantially from merged area to merged area, as well as within merged areas themselves. In some areas over half the teachers

report that less than one quarter of their students are of low ability, in others only half as many teachers report this. In most areas few teachers report that three quarters or more of their students are of low intellectual ability, but in three merged areas one quarter or more state this to be the case.

Overall, over two-thirds of responding teachers state that less than one quarter of their students are "hard core poor" and only one in seven report that more than half of their students could be so described. In most cases, there seems to be a fair amount of consensus among teachers on this matter.

Teachers reported proportions of their students who were working hard in class and who were making satisfactory progress as follows:

Table 20

Students Working Hard in Class and Making Progress in ABE
(in percent)

| Students | Teachers Reporting Students Working Hard | Satisfactory Progress |
|---|---|---|
| 75 and more | 43 | 38 |
| 50-75 | 46 | 43 |
| 50 and less | 12 | 19 |

Eight factors which might interfere with teaching and learning in ABE were listed, and teachers indicated to what extent each interfered. Two of these factors were student characteristics -- motivation and intellectual ability. Several are factors common in ABE: irregular attendance, great variation in student skill and/or ability levels, and

continuous enrollment of new students. Others included class size, initial screening of students, and quality of instructional materials.

In terms of student characteristics, teachers generally felt that lack of motivation interfered more than did low academic ability. 31% indicated that lack of motivation was a moderately great to great interference, twice the number of teachers who pointed to low academic ability as an equally great interference. While only 24% of the teachers reported that lack of motivation constituted little or no interference, 37% said that low academic ability interfered little or not at all with teaching and learning.

Irregular attendance was picked as the one factor which most interferes with teaching and learning in the classroom by 43% of the teachers polled. An equal proportion indicated that it constituted a moderately great to great interference. The proportion of teachers who are plagued by irregular attendance varies substantially from one merged area to another, with as many as 74% and as few as 8% citing this as a great or moderately great interference, and from 20% to 80% choosing this as the one factor which most interferes. In large part, this is probably a reflection of the fact that absenteeism varies substantially from one merged area to another, as reported above.

In contrast with irregular attendance, continuous enrollment of new students is not perceived as a problem in the classroom by the vast majority of Iowa's ABE teachers. Overall, 4 out of 5 teachers indicate low or moderately low interference on this score, and only 6% state that it constitutes a moderately great to great interference.

63% of the teachers indicated that variation in student skill and

ability levels constitutes a minor or no interference. One quarter of responding teachers feel that these differences constitute a moderate interference, and about one out of eight see differences in student skill and ability level to be a moderately great to great interference. These proportions vary relatively little among merged areas.

80% of the teachers report that poor initial screening of students is a negligible problem.

Three quarters of the teachers report interference due to class size is a minor problem or no concern. Almost one in ten teachers, however, report moderately high to great interference due to this factor. Few teachers pick this as the most disruptive factor. In one merged area, only half the teachers discount class size as a disruptive factor rating it one or two on a five point scale of importance. In two others, the proportion who state it is a negligible problem is between 95 and 100%. Differences in student-teacher ratio reported in Table 1 explain these differences.

Poor instructional materials are cited as a moderately great to great problem by only 11% of teachers responding; over two-thirds report poor instructional materials constitute a minor or no interference. In one merged area, one third of responding teachers report that poor instructional materials do constitute a moderately great to great interference in teaching and learning. Obviously, there is a major discrepancy in the perceptions of teachers and their students, the students considering the problem of poor instructional materials a much more serious impediment than do the teachers.

Interpretative Summary

With only 7% of ABE teachers in Iowa employed on a full-time basis, attention is naturally directed to them. What has been the experience of using full-time teachers and what are the advantages and disadvantages?

Is teacher recruitment and performance judged differently for day and evening classes (and are student characteristics and goals significantly different?), in distant and isolated classes from those close to each other and to headquarters in the merged area, in 0-4 from 5-8 from 9-12, co-sponsored classes and those that are not? The fact that these differentiations may indeed reflect very different student needs and characteristics and consequently teacher performance suggests a different set of administrator expectations should govern. For example, teacher-student ratios in 0-4 classes obviously should be small, counseling more available, aides assigned those classes on a priority basis, greater proportion of recruitment effort advocated, greater dropout. lower attendance anticipated, slower academic progress anticipated. These classes should be compared only with other 0-4 classes, not those at higher grade levels. Budgets should reflect the greater cost of recruiting and maintaining attendance at this level; in-service education cost per FTE should be separately rationalized. And teachers should be selected, provided specialized in-service education, and evaluated against criteria pertaining only to 0-4.

Teachers want and apparently need more in-service education than they are getting. There is evidence that special consideration needs to be given in designing in-service education for inexperienced and new

teachers with a somewhat different emphasis than that designed for experienced teachers. In the socialization process inexperienced teachers tend to have their good ideas frustrated and the program is the poorer for it. Examples are their high emphasis on relating instruction to the lives of their learners -- emphasizing coping skills, the local development and adaptation of instructional materials, making individualized assignments, emphasizing student-teacher conferences in providing learner's feedback on their performance. The relatively inexperienced teachers tend to reject some good ideas of experienced teachers, particularly in emphasis on small group discussion and problem solving. In-service education should be designed to reinforce these values if they are considered important by those giving leadership to ABE.

Newer teachers require a much larger proportion of the coordinator's time than experienced teachers and more than they are currently getting. Novice-master assignments and coaching usually is confined to the newer teacher who prefer local workshops over those sponsored by others.

There is obvious need to clarify the role of the learning center and programmed materials, and for teachers to exchange experience on these instructional resources.

Teachers characterized as "non-traditional", those giving major emphasis to content areas other than the 3 R's, represent a large proportion of the teaching staff. This group of teachers place significantly more emphasis on the importance of local materials development and adaptation, counseling, grouping learners to accommodate individual differences, coping skills, increasing self-confidence as a goal, teacher observation in evaluating student progress, use of diagnostic tests,

use of student records in counseling and referral, and more in-service education, especially that devoted to human relations in the classroom.

This profile of teacher style will appeal to some coordinators more than to others. From the perspective of the outside evaluator, this style is closer to the usual model toward which adult education strives. Moreover, it should be remembered that students for whom the GED is a first priority goal are not less interested in the non-traditional content areas than students who do not have such a priority. Obviously, more of the non-traditional emphasis should be integrated in a program which will continue to have a GED orientation. There is no reason why the fact that there are a substantial number of students with the high school diploma as a goal should mean that to achieve it there must be a traditional style of instruction overwhelmingly devoted to teaching the 3 R's. The Evaluation Committee endorced the values of the non-traditional teachers while recognizing the importance of the 3 R's.

A broader consensus is needed among coordinators, directors, and DPI representatives and others concerned with in-service education pertaining to each issue raised here and a planned effort made to actively foster improved instructional practice.

There is striking objective evidence that teachers who see preparation for the GED exam experience significantly higher rates of absenteeism and dropout. Traditional teachers report significantly more absenteeism than do non-traditional teachers, and teachers who give priority to fostering student self-confidence as an important program goal enjoy lower dropout rates. Perhaps DPI could fund an experimental project for identifying ways to help teachers learn how to build student self-confidence

and disseminate results through staff development programs.

Another provocative finding with direct implications for in-service education is that the use of simulated learning experiences in instruction is highly correlated with very low rates of absenteeism.

There are striking differences among teachers in reporting practices and perceptions in different merged areas. Often merged area teachers have diametrically opposite views on such matters as use of the learning center, one-to-one instruction, the GED, use of learning groups, the place of university classes, coaching and workshops sponsored by others outside the local ABE program. Such marked differences suggest that leaders should examine these and related differences within their merged area and among merged areas to make sure that decisions are based on as broad a body of experience as possible. There is need for the cooperative development of policy and program guidelines.

Teachers generally see their students as warm and friendly, neither hypersensitive to criticism nor inclined to resent authority, and relatively few as representing the hard-core poor. Teachers generally believe students are realistic about the time and effort required to reach their educational goals and do not realize how widespread student ambiguity about this is or how concerned students are about this problem. Roughly comparable proportions of teachers report 75 percent of their students are highly motivated and only 25 percent are highly motivated. However, an overwhelming majority report that most of their students are working hard in class and are making satisfactory progress. However, lack of self-confidence is seen by teachers as a pervasive problem for most students in ABE classes although there is wide variation among

reports from different merged areas.

There are discrepancies between teacher perceptions of the proportion of their students who have unrealistic expectations of the time and effort required to reach their educational goals and the seriousness of this problem and the perceptions of students who report serious concern over the lack of knowledge in this area. Merged areas in which counseling is common report less of a problem than others. There are hard to explain variations in the proportions of low ability students reported by teachers in the different merged areas.

Teachers report that among factors which interfere with teaching and learning, irregular attendance was the most frequent problem. Variations among merged areas reflect the substantial differences in rates of absenteeism among them. Three quarters of the teachers report that low motivation interferes more than a little with teaching and learning. The considerable disparity in class size among the merged areas is reflected by teachers in some who see class size as a problem.

## LEARNING CENTER COORDINATOR

Independent Learning Centers (ILCs) play a variety of roles in Iowa's ABE program. A few merged areas have no ILCs at all, while four areas have more than one ILC, with one area reporting 5 such centers. Some of the ILCs serve no ABE students or only a handful, while others serve several hundred ABE students. A few ILCs provide only GED testing or counseling while others provide a wide range of instructional and testing services as an integral part of the merged area ABE program. In at least two cases the ILC coordinator and the ABE coordinator are the same person, and in at least three merged areas ABE teachers are considered to be part of the ILC's instructional staff. Half a dozen ILC coordinators did not know what proportion of their budget consisted of federal funds; an equal number indicated that Title III (now Title VI) contributed nothing or virtually nothing to their budgets while 8 noted that ABE funds constituted 50-65% of their operating budgets.

One thing is clear from the preceding capsule description: It makes little sense to talk about the ILC as if it meant the same thing in each of the merged area programs. In some of the merged areas the ILC appears to play a vital and central role in ABE instruction; in other areas it plays a subsidiary yet significant part in the total ABE operation; in still other areas the ILC has a marginal role at best and in a few cases no role whatever in ABE.

### ABE Enrollment

According to figures supplied by the ILC coordinators, a total of 2,656 ABE students participated in ILC activities from September 1, 1974 to approximately February 1, 1975. The average number of ABE students for the 19 ILCs providing statistics was 139. This figure, however,

obscures the wide variation from one center to another. A better picture of reality is provided by the raw data distribution which follows: 0, 0, 7, 21, 23, 45, 48, 60, 64, 78, 80, 112, 160, 200, 250, 255, 327, 363, 563. Obviously, the figures are greatly skewed, especially by the 6 programs with 200 or more students. An ILC that services 563 ABE students is undoubtedly a very different kind of operation from one that services 7 or 21 students.

It is of interest to examine not only absolute numbers of ABE students served, but the proportional effort devoted to ABE as opposed to other student clienteles. Again, as we might expect there is wide variation, with some ILCs serving ABE students almost exclusively and others serving proportionately few undereducated adults. The raw frequencies are given below to the question "What proportion of your learning center participants are ABE students?": 0, 1, 1.7, 14, 20, 20, 25, 25, 33, 40, 45, 70, 75, 80, 80, 90, 95, 95, 95. Once again the figures are skewed toward the top: the mean percentage of ABE students is 47.6, but the median is closter to a third.

These figures do seem to show that, except for a handful of ILCs with a nominal proportion of ABE students, ABE is a big part of the ILC operation in most merged areas.

Student Contact Hours

ILC directors were asked "What was the average number of contact hours each of these ABE students had with the learning center since September 1, 1974?" As one would expect, there was a lesser degree of variability in response to this item. Excluding those who answered zero (no ABE students), the raw frequencies were as follows: 18, 20, 23, 24, 24, 26, 27, 36, 37,

43, 45, 56, 60, 70, 95, 100. The mean number of contact hours was 44 and the median 36. The figures given were for approximately a six month period. If we assume that (excluding holidays) this six month period encompassed about 20 instructional weeks, then the typical ABE student spends something like two hours per week working in the ILC.

Linkage Between ILC and ABE Program

Learning center coordinators were asked "What degree of coordination between learning center staff and ABE staff has characterized the planning and utilization of your center's resources?" Of the 19 ILC coordinators responding to this item, only 4 indicated little or no coordination, 5 indicated an average or moderate degree of coordination, and 10 reported "frequent close coordination."

Most ILC coordinators also reported that ABE staff members conferred fairly frequently with ILC staff regarding ABE program needs and problems. Two said they conferred daily over the preceding six month period, while most others indicated 5, 10, or 15 discussions with ABE staff concerning program needs and problems. All but 4 of the ILC coordinators stated that in the past year they or members of their staff "participated in the orientation of ABE staff to the use of the learning center."

Sources of Referral of ABE Students to the ILC

ILC coordinators indicated that ABE students come to the center from numerous sources. In every ILC but one only a small minority of ABE students were reported referred by the ABE coordinator or by ABE teachers -- a rather astounding finding in our opinion. The proportion of ABE students who enter the ILC from various sources is shown in Table 21 below.

Table 21

Mean Percentage of ILC Students
Who Enter from Various Sources of Referral

| Source of Referral | % Entering from this Source |
|---|---|
| 1. ABE coordinator | 9.3 |
| 2. ABE teacher | 4.5 |
| 3. College counselors | 10.3 |
| 4. Other institutions, agencies, and organizations | 17.2 |
| 5. Business and industry | 4.0 |
| 6. Public schools | 7.9 |
| 7. Paid recruiters | 6.9 |
| 8. Other center students | 13.2 |
| 9. Self-selection by student | 14.6 |
| 10. Other (advertising, publicity) | 5.3 |

Table 21 shows that there is no single major source of referral of ABE students to the ILC. We would have expected the great majority of students to be referred by ABE staff. It is likely that the importance of this source of referral is somewhat masked by the fact that in several merged areas the ILC is an integral part of the ABE program rather than a separate unit.

Problems

The sub-section on the role of the ILC in the section of this report dealing with instruction points to a number of problem areas which will only be mentioned briefly here. One problem is that while many teachers would prefer a greater role for the ILC in ABE instruction, a majority

ILC coordinators appear to feel that the ILC should play a lesser role in ABE than it does at present. It is not entirely clear from our data why ILC coordinators tend to feel this way. Another indicator of possible conflict, at least in some merged areas, is that teachers would like more emphasis on collaborative planning of the student's work with the ILC staff than is currently the case in actual practice.

The final item on our Learning Center Coordinator questionnaire asked if there were any special problems inherent in the nature of the ABE program which have inhibited its optimal use of the learning center. Eight ILC coordinators responded "yes" to this item while 11 responded "no."

Three of the ILC coordinators who thought there were special problems inherent in ABE mentioned characteristics of ABE students in explaining their answers. One noted that "ABE students often can't study independently." Another wrote: "Most ABE students feel more secure in a classroom situation.... We do not have enough staff in the Learning Center to fulfill all of the needs of an ABE students." The third ILC coordinator mentioned "fear of failure" and "short attention span" as major problems.

Other problems noted were geographical isolation, transportation difficulties, and the need for working students to have access to the ILC during evening hours. The coordinator of one ILC noted that the source of funding for the center precluded serving ABE students. In this case the ILC was 100% funded by the Vocational Education Division to service vocational education students who required special instructional arrangements because of "handicaps and/or disadvantages."

Interpretative Summary

The ILC varies enormously in function and significance among Iowa's merged area programs. In 7 merged areas, the ILCs serve fewer than 50 ABE students; in 6 areas ILC ABE enrollments exceed 200. A few ILCs provide only GED testing and counseling. Others provide a wide range of instructional and testing services as an integral part of the merged area ABE program.

Our data indicate that there are severe problems concerning the ILC's role in many merged areas. Teachers report relatively little utilization of ILCs by their students, but many say the ILC should play a greatly expanded part in ABE instruction. Strangely, a majority of ILC coordinators seem to feel that the ILC should play a lesser, not greater role in serving ABE students. Is this actually the case? If so, why? What are the implications for ABE program development of these apparent strains in the ABE/ILC linkage?